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ARTHUR JAMES MASON, D.D.

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THE
Purgatory

The State of the Faithful Departed

Invocation of Saints

THREE LECTURES

BY

ARTHUR JAMES MASON D.D.

LADY MARGARET'S READER IN DIVINITY
AT CAMBRIDGE

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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PREFACE

THESE lectures were delivered in June of the present year to the clergy of Leeds and the neighbourhood. They contain the substance of four lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge on the Hulsean foundation in the years 1899 and 1900.

The subject was chosen because the lecturer believed that there was a certain tendency to revolt against what has been called "the Anglican tradition" on the subject of the Intermediate State and kindred subjects. In such discussions the only possible hope of a satisfactory solution lies in a candid appeal to history,—to see how the matter in question is dealt with in Holy Scripture, and how the Scriptural teaching was understood by the early Fathers. No tradition, Anglican or otherwise, can be held to have a binding claim upon our allegiance, if it cannot be shown to represent

b 2

the teaching of the Apostles, and to have been received as such in the early and undivided Church. If a doctrine or a practice can be traced to an origin in the sixteenth century or in the thirteenth, in the fifth century or in the fourth, such a doctrine or practice may be right or it may be wrong, but it cannot be laid upon the Church of to-day as a thing necessary to be received.

When judged by this standard, the "Anglican tradition" on the Intermediate State comes nearer to having a right to the submissive acceptance of Catholics than the traditions in whose interest it is now challenged. The following pages will, I trust, show that the doctrine of Purgatory begins with the modest and tentative suggestions of St. Augustine in the fifth century; that the belief that the saints "go to Heaven" when they die—it may be expressed in a variety of ways—was only held in the Primitive Church by persons of heretical tendency, who undervalued the body, and that it gained no support from great Catholic teachers till the time of St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Jerome; that the Invocation of Saints cannot be traced further back than the fourth century.

It may readily be granted that the "Anglican tradition" is sometimes expressed in a form too sharply defined, especially in one particular. The word "Paradise" has received from Anglican teachers a restriction of meaning which is perhaps not necessitated by the usage of Holy Scripture, nor by that of the Fathers. That the faithful departed, or at any rate some classes of them, are "in Paradise" with Christ, before their resurrection from the dead, is made certain to Christian believers by the Lord's words to the penitent robber. It is, however, by no means so certain that the name of "Paradise" is to be exclusively applied to the state of the blessed dead before the resurrection. When St. Paul speaks of being "caught away"—not "caught up," as A.V. and R.V. alike have it—"into Paradise,"¹ we cannot be at all sure that he means the abode of the blessed in their intermediate condition. It is far from clear whether that experience of his is, or is not, the same with that which he describes just before as being "caught away even unto the third heaven." When it is promised in the Revelation that the conqueror shall "eat of the tree of life

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 4, *ἡρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον.*

which is in the Paradise of God,"¹ we cannot be at all sure that the promise is only one that concerns the Intermediate State, and not one that extends into the eternal future beyond the resurrection and the last judgment. In the early Christian writers outside the New Testament, the word has a considerable variety of values, some more extended and some less. It is not, in the Fathers, the fixed and recognised name for the state of the faithful between death and resurrection. If that state can be said to be described by any fixed and recognised name, it is the name of "Abraham's bosom." "Paradise" may, as Tertullian thought, be only the home of a specially privileged class of souls; and it may be their home long after the resurrection.

On the other hand, the word "heaven" has received, both in Romanist and in Protestant usage, and even occasionally among the later Fathers, a laxity of meaning which does not correspond with the Bible use of the word. In the Bible it has two senses. Either it means heaven in the local sense—the sky; or it denotes the abode of God, the "place" where He is

¹ Rev. ii. 7.

fully manifested. The only passages where it seems to have any other signification are that mentioned above—"the third heaven"—and those where Christ is said to have "passed through the heavens" and to be now "far above all the heavens." Such passages are doubtless to be interpreted in the light of the Jewish conception of "seven heavens;" they present only an extension of the local sense of "sky." The conception of the "seven heavens" passed on into Christian literature, and it will be remembered how Dante, using the word "heaven" as the lesser word and "Paradise" as the larger, describes how he first realised that not only the highest heaven, but the lower heavens also, formed a part of Paradise:

"Chiaro mi fu allor com' ogni dove
In cielo è Paradiso."¹

But the New Testament use of the language of Jewish speculation on the subject of the "heavens" must not be taken to set the seal of inspiration upon that speculation, as if St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews intended directly to teach that various "heavens" exist; nor have we any reason to

¹ *Paradise*, iii. 88.

suppose that the place or state of the blessed dead is either counted as one among these "heavens," or (as in Dante's language) extends throughout them.

It is but a confusing of the issue when Roman Catholic theologians, to support their assertion that perfectly cleansed souls pass at once to heaven, point to such expressions in the Fathers and in the utterances of the martyrs, as that they "go to God." There are degrees of "coming to God," and different senses in which souls may be said to "be with Christ." The "vision of God" may with perfect justice be said to constitute the bliss of heaven, but it does not follow that every one who is said to "see God" is "in heaven" in the sense in which Christ "went into heaven" at His Ascension. "The pure in heart" are permitted to "see God" in this life, not only in the life to come. To that extent, therefore, they are already partakers of the bliss of heaven; and the New Testament repeatedly teaches that it is the privilege of Christians even now to "have their citizenship in heaven," and to "sit in heavenly places with Christ," and the like. But no one is misled by such statements into supposing

that the present state of the true Christian is identical with that which awaits him hereafter. Christ Himself, while upon earth, lived in the constant enjoyment of the sense of God's presence and favour; yet even after the resurrection He speaks of Himself as having not yet ascended to His Father. If, therefore, the martyrs are spoken of in early Christian language as "going to God," and the like, it is not to be concluded that they were supposed to pass at once into their final glory and reward, or into a glory and reward only separated from the final by the outward and accidental and almost imperceptible difference that hereafter their bodies will share a bliss which their spirits already enjoy to the full.

The "Anglican tradition," even if its nomenclature has not always been elastic enough, is faithful to Scripture and to the primitive teaching in making the general resurrection and the Day of Judgment a much more important turning-point in the history of individual souls, as well as of the race, than it is made in the Romanist teaching. It has the further advantage of not drawing a sharp line of demarcation between the penitential and disciplinary period

of the soul's history after death, if there be such a period, and the joy and peace to which it leads. While the scholastic theology, as represented by the great *Commedia*, divides the unseen world into three regions—Hell, in which the lost are already punished, although the punishment does not yet affect their bodies also, as it will do hereafter; Paradise, consisting of various heavens, in which the fully purified enjoy the supreme bliss, although as yet their bodies are not associated in it with their souls; and Purgatory, where the saved, but not yet perfected, are working out their penance; the "Anglican tradition" makes a different trichotomy. "Heaven" and "Hell," when used in their strict senses, are the eternal abodes or states into which, at the Judgment Day, men, in the fulness of their reincorporated condition, will go in accordance with their deeds. Meanwhile, all, both good and bad, are in a preliminary, preparatory state of disembodiment, which, if it is to be described in pictorial language, must be subdivided again into two regions,—the regions of the saved and of the lost, answering to "Abraham's bosom" and "Hades" in the famous Parable. But of any

further subdivision, making one region where the saved but imperfect are being purged, and another, into which they may be transferred when their purgation is over, the "Anglican tradition" knows nothing. That every one at death goes "to his own place" and to no other man's, that there are "many mansions" in the unseen world, and that possibly souls may go from "mansion" to "mansion," as stages in a journey towards perfection, is not incredible; but there is no ground which a disciple of Catholic antiquity can recognise as valid for believing that the souls of the saved are in two wholly distinct places or spheres, the one of chastisement and the other of bliss. It may be a matter of uncertainty, and even of comparative indifference, by what name the intermediate state of saved souls is to be called; but Purgatory, if there be a Purgatory at all, must be a department, or region, or aspect, or phase, or stage, or process, in the same great section of the soul's history as the repose and refreshment granted before the Judgment Day; and whatever measure of the "vision of God" is given to saved souls before the resurrection, their state must not be identified with that eternal state which begins

with the resurrection to life. In this teaching the "Anglican tradition" is abundantly justified by the appeal to the Fathers. The teaching which makes much of the passing from "Purgatory" into "Paradise," and little of the change effected by the resurrection, is untrue alike to the Bible and to primitive Christianity.

CANTERBURY,

August 13, 1901.

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LECTURE I.

THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

"THE Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory . . . is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."

In these words our XXIInd Article touches what I suppose to have been the most prominent of all the changes that the Reformation effected. In the Middle Ages religion was much more occupied than it is now with the thought of death. It was the one thing about which men were exceedingly in earnest. Their thoughts were dominated by one tremendous conception. This was the conception of Purgatory. Towards this all religious exercises turned. The Holy Eucharist in particular came to be used to such an

extent in connexion with the souls in Purgatory as to overshadow all other uses of it. The bequests for masses, the chantries which were founded—although in many instances the chantries served other purposes besides the masses said for their founders—were a kind of spiritual insurance against the pains of Purgatory. The alms that were distributed, the charitable legacies, “good works” of all kinds, had the same object.¹ It seemed as if to make precaution against Purgatory was the main purpose of religion. The belief brought vast sums of money to the clergy and to the monastic orders. The reforming party affected to think that it had been invented for that purpose. “Purgatory pick-purse” was one of their commonest catch-words. Against Purgatory and against everything connected with it, they aimed their bitterest shafts. There was nothing—not monastic vows,

¹ This must be borne in mind in reading the otherwise useful remarks by Dr. Gasquet on the purpose of mediæval Chantries and Obits in his *Eve of the Reformation*, p. 399 foll. The alms were given both to procure the prayers of the recipients for the soul of the benefactor, and also directly as a form of sacrifice on his behalf.

not the cultus of images, not pilgrimages—which they attacked with such invective and such ridicule. Their polemic against the Mass itself derived the greater part of its violence from the association of the Mass with Purgatory. To shatter the belief in Purgatory was to destroy the leading feature of mediaeval Christianity, so far as the West was concerned.

In order to understand this formidable conception, and to appreciate the language of our formularies with regard to it, we must endeavour to trace, at least in outline, the history of its development.

The thought of a purifying discipline after death for those who need it occurs among Christian authors as early as in the writings of the Alexandrian Clement. The principal passage is one in which Clement draws out his threefold classification of men, and of the different "mansions" or "folds" appropriate to each. The man of perfect knowledge, the true Gnostic, has the highest abode of all. "'But there are other sheep,'" so Clement quotes the Lord's words, "'which are not of

this fold,' who have a different fold or mansion assigned to them, according to their place in the scale. It is the fold of faith." The "believer" in Clement's hierarchy ranks below the man of knowledge; while the Jews and Gentiles, or at least the better of them, who in this world lack only faith in Christ, have their place in the next world below the believer, though they have just judgment given them. But the believer must be a man of good life. If our Lord says, "Thy faith hath saved thee," it is to none but Jews, who have lived a disciplined and blameless life, and only need the addition of faith. "A man cannot be a believer," says Clement, "if he is not under self-control. Even if he quits the flesh (without having perfectly acquired it), he must needs lay aside the passions before he can pass into his own mansion," which has been described as the mansion of faith. "Our believer, therefore, having put off his passions by means of much discipline, will go into the mansion next above his former one, bearing for his greatest punishment his special penitence for the sins committed by him after baptism.

His distress is made the greater by not yet possessing, or not possessing fully, what he sees others sharing; and he feels shame also for his trespasses. These are the greatest punishments which the believer has to bear; for the justice of God is good, and His goodness is just. Even if at some point the chastisements come to an end, according as each man's expiation is complete and he is wholly purified, those who have been adjudged to that 'other fold' have the great and abiding grief of not being admitted to the society of those who for their righteousness are glorified."¹

¹ *Strom.* vi. p. 794 (Potter): Οὐκ ἂν οὖν μετὰ ἀκρασίας πιστὸς εἴη· ἀλλὰ κἂν ἐξέλθῃ τὴν σάρκα, ἀποθέσθαι τὰ πάθη ἀνάγκη τοῦτον, ὥς εἰς τὴν μοσὴν τὴν οἰκίαν χωρῆσαι δυνηθῆναι. Πλέον δέ ἐστι τοῦ πιστεῦσαι τὸ γινῶναι, καθάπερ ἀμέλει τοῦ σωθῆναι τὸ καὶ μετὰ τὸ σωθῆναι τιμῆς τῆς ἀνωτάτω ἀξιοθῆναι. Διὰ πολλῆς τοίνυν τῆς παιδείας ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰ πάθη ὁ πιστὸς ἡμῖν μέτεισιν ἐπὶ τὴν βελτίονα τῆς προτέρας μονῆς, μεγίστην κόλασιν ἐπιφερόμενος τὸ ἰδίωμα τῆς μετανοίας ὃν ἐξήμαρτεν μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα. Ἀριᾶται γοῦν ἔτι μᾶλλον, ἥτοι μηδέπω ἢ καὶ μηδ' ὅλως τυγχάνων ὃν ἄλλους ὀρεῖ μετεilahφῶτας· πρὸς δὲ ἐπαισχύνεται τοῖς πλημμεληθεῖσιν αὐτῷ· αἱ δὲ μέγιστα κολάσεις εἰσι τῷ πιστῷ. Ἀγαθὴ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη, καὶ δίκαια ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγαθότης αὐτοῦ. Κἂν παύσωνται ἔρα που αἱ τιμωρίαι κατὰ τὴν ἀποπλήρωσιν τῆς ἐκτίσεως καὶ τῆς ἐκάστου ἀποκαθάρσεως, μεγίστην ἔχουσι παραμένουσιν λύπην ὅτι [lege οἱ] τῆς ἄλλης ἄξιοι εὐρηθέντες αὐλῆς, τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ

It is a rash thing to make sure that one has mastered the meaning of a passage of Clement. But, if I rightly interpret him, he appears here to be teaching how the "believer" attains to the believer's proper home. If he succeeds in getting complete self-mastery in this life, he seems to pass into it at once. If not, "much discipline" awaits him. This discipline is further described as a series of expiatory chastisements, which for sins committed after baptism are coextensive with a purifying process in the soul, and end with it. There is no fixed period at which all the class of believers are transferred together from the state of chastisement to the mansion next above; the time of transference varies with the individual. Clement's language leaves it

μὴ συνεῖναι τοῖς διὰ δικαιοσύνην δοξασθεῖσιν. See Potter's note on the passage, and the references which he gives. In *Strom.* iv. p. 634: 'Ἰστίον μέντοι τοὺς μετὰ τὸ λουτρὸν τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι περιπίπτοντας, τοὺτους εἶναι τοὺς παιδευομένους· τὰ μὲν γὰρ προεινεργηθέντα (the sins committed before baptism) ἀφείλη, τὰ ἐπιγενόμενα ἁκαθάριεσθαι, Clement appears not to confine his view to punishment after death, inasmuch as one object of the punishment is to warn others not to do the like; but punishment after death is also included.

open to suppose that some believers may fail ever to get beyond this stage of penal purgation. Those who get beyond it still have a punishment to bear, though the goodness which tempers the justice of God makes it a lighter one than might have been expected. Shame and desire, which constitute penitence, continue to fill the souls who occupy the believer's heaven. The society of those who know is beyond them.

Whether this account of Clement's meaning is in every detail exact or not, Clement certainly supposed that there were forms of beneficial suffering after this life was ended. It is not legitimate, therefore, to assert¹ that Clement conceived only of an earthly discipline in the various passages where he speaks of a purifying fire. "We affirm," he says, in reference to the Stoic doctrine of a periodical conflagration of the world, "that fire sanctifies sinful souls—not meaning thereby the common fire that devours indiscriminately, but the prudent fire which

¹ As Hofmann does in Hauck's (Herzog's) *Realencyclopädie*, s.v. "Fegfeuer."

penetrates the soul that passes through the fire."¹ That he may have included in his view the providential purpose of afflictions in this life is more than possible, but it seems certain that he was thinking principally of the punishments of "sinful souls" hereafter.

There can be no question but that several elements of the "Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory" are already here. But on the other hand, there are certain points to be taken into account before Clement can be used as a witness to that doctrine, at least as a revealed doctrine of the Church. In the first place, Clement does not base his teaching on the interpretation of Scripture, nor even on the ground of apostolic tradition. Though his affirmations are confidently made, they have

¹ *Strom.* vii. p. 851 (ed. Potter): *ἔσμεν δ' ἡμεῖς ἀγιδίσειν τὸ πῦρ, οὐ τὰ κρία, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἀμαρτωλοῦς ψυχὰς· πῦρ οὐ τὸ παμφάγον καὶ βάνανσον, ἀλλὰ τὸ φρόνιμον λέγοντες, τὸ διευκνούμενον διὰ ψυχῆς τῆς διερχομένης τὸ πῦρ.* He uses the same epithet, *φρόνιμον*, of the corrective fire in *Paed.* iii. 8, p. 280, and in *Protrh. Ecl.* xxv., where he says that it is so called *παρὰ τοῖς προφήταις*. It is probably his interpretation of Isa. xliii. 2, *ἐὰν διέλθῃς διὰ πυρός κ.τ.λ.*—a passage which we shall find used by Origen in a somewhat similar manner.

their origin in the heathen philosophies and religions, into which Clement endeavours to read a Christian meaning, and in his own personal speculations and reasonings. And there is nothing either in these passages which I have quoted, nor in any others that I am aware of in Clement's writings, to indicate that the purgatory which Clement expected was one that intervened between death and the day of judgment. His purgatory was hell. All divine chastisement, in his belief, was remedial. Although some portion of it might fall in the period before the resurrection, he does not limit the opportunity of progress from mansion to mansion. Men have all eternity in which to rise, and—it is a somewhat sad prospect, it must be owned—when “believers” have risen to the highest that is possible for them, they still, if they have sinned after baptism, have to endure for ever the pangs which in “the Romish doctrine” would belong to a temporary purgatory, the shame which nothing covers, and the longing for that which has been irretrievably forfeited.

Although the teaching of Clement was not the direct result of the study of Christian texts, yet there were texts of Holy Scripture to which such teaching could easily attach itself. The discussion of such texts had a special interest for Clement's great disciple Origen. To him the language of St. Paul about the fire that should "try every man's work"¹ conveyed the notion of a fire that should try every man himself. It was a baptism that every one must undergo.

It is true that there are variations in Origen's mode of expressing himself. Sometimes he speaks as if the fire were only for Christians who have forfeited their privilege. Not the same person, he says in one place (though he says it hesitatingly), is baptized by Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The holy man is baptized with the Holy Ghost; but the man who, after believing and receiving the Holy Ghost, has again fallen into sin, is washed with fire. "Blessed," he cries, "is he who is baptized with the Holy Ghost, and has no need of the

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 13.

baptism with fire; and thrice miserable is he whosoever requires to be baptized with the fire.”¹ Sometimes, on the other hand, he speaks as if this fire were only for Christians who have preserved their baptismal privilege. The Lord Jesus stands over the fiery stream, which issues from before Him, with the flaming sword in His hand, which keeps the way of the tree of life, and as souls come to Him, after this life is ended, to be admitted to Paradise, He baptizes those that require it in that stream; but only such as can show signs of the earlier baptisms of water and the Spirit. To be baptized with fire by the Lord Jesus is a blessing only bestowed upon those who have kept these earlier baptisms.² It is possible to reconcile

¹ In *Jerem.* ii. 3: Διὰ τοῦτο ὁ Ἰησοῦς βαπτίζει, τὰχα νῦν εὐρίσκω τὸν λόγον, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ· οὐχ ὅτι τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ, ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν ἅγιον ἐν τῷ πνεύματι [τῷ] ἁγίῳ, τὸν δὲ μετὰ τὸ πιστεῦσαι, μετὰ τὸ ἀξιωθῆναι ἁγίου πνεύματος, πάλιν ἡμαρτηκότα λούει ἐν πυρὶ· ὥς μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι βαπτίζομενον ὑπὸ Ἰησοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ. Μακάριος οὖν ὁ βαπτίζομενος ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι καὶ μὴ δεόμενος βαπτίσματος τοῦ ἀπὸ πυρός· τρισάθλιος δὲ ἐκεῖνος ὅστις χρεῖαν ἔχει βαπτίσασθαι τῷ πυρὶ.

² In *Luc.* xxiv.: [*Baptizati sunt apostoli post ascensionem eius ad caelos spiritu sancto: quod autem igni fuerint baptizati, scriptura*

these statements—though Origen was no slave to consistency. He may have meant that while a Christian ought to live such a life as to escape the baptism of fire, yet the benefits of that baptism are promised to none but Christians. In comparison with those who do not need it, those who need it are thrice miserable ; but it is still more miserable to have sunk so low as to lose the right to it.

But there are other places where Origen says that all alike must pass through that fire. He says that we must all come to the refiner's furnace. If any man brings to it many good works and little iniquity, that little will be refined out, and the good gold will remain. If any brings more of the lead that adulterates the

non memorat. Sed quomodo Ioannes iuxta Iordanem fluvium uenientes ad baptismum praestolabatur, et alios abigebat, dicens Generatio uiperarum et reliqua, porro eos qui confitebantur uitia atque peccata suscipiebat, sic] stabit in igneo flumine Dominus Iesus iuxta flammeam romphaeam, ut quemcumque post exitum uitae huius, qui ad paradisi transire desiderat et purgatione indiget, hoc cum amne baptizet et ad cupita transmittat ; eum uero qui non habet signum priorum baptismatum lauacro igneo non baptizet. Oportet enim prius aliquem baptisari aqua et spiritu ut, cum ad igneum fluvium venerit, ostendat se et aquae et spiritus lauacro seruasse, et tunc mereatur etiam ignis accipere baptismum.

metal, he will be more severely tried ; so that if there be but a little gold, it may be purified and preserved. If any brings nothing but lead, then he must "sink like lead in the mighty waters."¹ If in this life we kill sin in ourselves, we shall not need the punishment of the eternal fire ; we shall not be doomed to the outer darkness, nor subjected to those torments which are ready to fall on sinners ; otherwise it is certain that the fire prepared for sinners awaits us ; the fire which shall try every man's work of what sort it is. "And, as I believe," continues Origen, evidently conscious that he is not uttering a received doctrine of the Church, but an independent conviction of his own, "we all must needs

¹ In *Exod. vi. 4* : *Idcirco igitur qui saluus fit, per ignem saluus fit, ut si quid forte de specie plumbi habuerit admixtum, id ignis decoquat et resoluat, ut efficiantur omnes aurum bonum. . . . Veniendum est ergo omnibus ad ignem, ueniendum est ad conflatorium. Sedet enim Dominus et conflat et purgat filios Iuda. Sed et illuc cum uenitur, si quis multa bona opera et parum aliquid iniquitatis attulerit, illud parum tamquam plumbum igni resoluatur ac purgatur, et totum remanet aurum purum. Et si quis plus illuc plumbi detulerit, plus exurit, ut amplius decoquatur, ut, etsi parum aliquid sit auri, purgatum tamen resideat. Quod si aliquis totus plumbeus uenerit, fiet de illo hoc quod scriptum est, demergetur in profundum, tamquam plumbum in aquam ualidissimam.*

come to that fire. Even a Paul or a Peter comes to that fire. But to such as they it is said, 'Though thou pass through the fire, the flames shall not kindle upon thee.' If, however," he adds with profound and touching humility, "it be a sinner like me, he shall come to the fire like Peter and Paul, but he shall not pass through it like Peter and Paul."¹

Origen, however, like Clement, draws no distinction between this fire and the fire of hell. He does not restrict the purgatorial discipline to the intermediate state. Indeed, his language seems generally to imply that the moment for

¹ Hom. iii. in Psalm. xxxvi. 1: *Si quidem uerbi Dei praeuenimus hoc opus, et in hac uita positi faciamus [? facimus] in nobis interire peccatum, ut numquam omnino a nobis . . . peccati gladius proferatur, non indigebimus poenae ignis aeterni, non tenebris exterioribus condemnabimur, neque illis suppliciis quae peccatoribus imminet subiacebimus. Si uero in hac uita contemnimus commonentis nos diuinae scripturae uerba, et curari uel emendari eius correptionibus nolumus, certum est quia manet nos ignis ille qui praeparatus est peccatoribus, et uenietur ad illum ignem in quo uniuscuiusque opus quale sit ignis probabit. Et, ut ego arbitror, omnes nos uenire necesse est ad illum ignem. Etiam si Paulus sit aliquis uel Petrus, ueniet tamen ad illum ignem. Sed illi tales audiunt: "etiam si per ignem transeas, flamma non aduret te." Si uero aliquis similis mei peccator sit, ueniet quidem ad ignem illum sicut Petrus et Paulus, sed non sic transiet sicut Petrus et Paulus.*

undergoing it is at the last Judgment. In one passage he clearly and unmistakably places it in that connexion. "For my part," he says, "I believe that even after the resurrection from the dead we shall need a cleansing and purifying sacrament (for no one will be able to rise without stain), and that no soul can be found that will at once be free from all faults."¹ There is no reason to suppose that he is here thinking of a different form of purification from that of which he speaks so often. He means, in this as in other passages, that at the Judgment-day, when the dead rise, all will have to bear some touch of hell-fire.

What hell-fire meant to him is shown in those deeply spiritual words which have sometimes been quoted as if they referred to a purgatory in the later sense. They contain, in fact, the earliest direct comment that I am acquainted with upon that passage of St. Paul which has since done duty as the scriptural *locus classicus* for Purgatory.

¹ In *Luc.* xiv. : *Ego puto quod et post resurrectionem ex mortuis indigeamus sacramento eluente nos atque purgante ; nemo enim absque sordibus resurgere poterit ; nec ullam posse animam reperiri quae universis statim vitiiis careat.*

"Every sinner," he says, "kindles the flame of his own fire, and is plunged in no fire that is kindled by another, or that was already in existence. The fuel and food of this fire are our sins, which the Apostle Paul called 'wood, hay, and stubble.' When the soul has amassed a multitude of evil works and abundance of sins, all that collection of evil becomes hot for torment, and is set on fire for punishment for as long a time as may be required, when by the power of God the mind or conscience is made to remember all the things of which in sinning it had imprinted upon itself the marks and outlines,—each foul and shameful action or ungodly deed,—and shall come to see spread out before its eyes the history of its own iniquities. Then the conscience is lashed and pricked with its own goads, and becomes its own accuser and a witness against itself. . . . There are many things," he proceeds, "which are hidden from us, and are known only to Him who is the Physician of our souls. . . . God, our Physician, willing to dispel the diseases of our souls, which they had

gathered by divers sins and transgressions, uses penal remedies, and applies even the torment of fire to those who have lost the soul's health."¹

In no later Greek Father, so far as I am aware, can we find reaffirmed that which Origen (as we have seen) introduces as a private opinion of his own—the doctrine that even the most perfect Christians must undergo a fiery purification hereafter. But part of the eschatological

¹ *Princ. II. x. 4: Hoc uidetur indicari, quod unusquisque peccatorum flammam sibi ipse proprii ignis accendat, et non in aliquem ignem, qui antea iam fuerit accensus ab alio uel ante ipsum substituerit, demergatur. Cuius ignis materia atque esca nostra sunt peccata, quae ab apostolo Paulo ligna et fenum et stipula nominantur. . . . Anima cum multitudinem malorum operum et abundantiam in se congregauerit peccatorum, competenti tempore omnis illa malorum congregatio effruescit ad supplicium, atque inflammatur ad poenas; cum mens ipsa uel conscientia per diuinam uirtutem omnia in memoriam recipiens, quorum in semetipsa signa quaedam et formas, cum peccaret, expresserat, et singulorum quae uel faede ac turpiter gesserat uel etiam impie commiserat, historiam quandam scelerum suorum ante oculos suos uidebit expositam; tunc et ipsa conscientia propriis stimulis agitur atque compungitur, et sui ipsa efficitur accusatrix et testis . . . 6. Multa sunt etiam alia quae nos latent, quae illi soli cognita sunt, qui est medicus animarum nostrarum. . . . Intellegendum est et hunc medicum nostrum Deum uolentem diluere uitia animarum nostrarum, quae ea peccatorum et scelerum diuersitate collegerant, uti huiusmodi poenalibus curis, insuper etiam ignis inferre supplicium his qui sanitatem animae perdiderrunt.*

doctrine which Origen had learned from Clement, the doctrine of a hell that is—for some or for all—remedial and temporary—was taken up from Origen by others. Gregory of Nyssa urges it with remarkable force. Gregory looks forward to the day when after a long period of purification by fires an united thanksgiving shall be raised to God from all the creation, both from those creatures which have been chastened in the process of purification and from those who never needed purification at all.¹ But he does not appear to imagine that any Christians except the wilfully impenitent will stand in need of that purification. He says that those whose stains are uncleansed, by the mystic water, by the invocation of the power of God, by penitence and reformation, must go to their appropriate place; and the appropriate place for adulterated gold is the refiner's fire, so that the evil in their composition may be melted

¹ *Or. Catech.* xxvi. : Ταῖς μακραῖς περιόδοις ληαιθεύοντος τοῦ κακοῦ τῆς φύσεως, . . . ἐπειδὴν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις τῶν νῦν ἐν κακίᾳ κειμένων γένηται, ὁμόφωνος ἡ εὐχαριστία παρὰ πάντων ἔσται τῆς κτίσεως, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ καθάρσει κεκολασμένων καὶ τῶν μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπιδειχθέντων καθάρσεως.

out, and their nature, long ages hereafter, may be made pure and saved to God. There is, he says, a cleansing power both in fire and in water ; and those who have washed away the stain of evil by the mystic water will have no need of the other form of cleansing.¹ It is not of Purgatory that Gregory speaks. It is of the condition to which some men will rise from death at the last day. All, he says, will rise again ; but the lot of those who have been cleansed will be very different from that of those who stand in need of cleansing. It is of these last—the men who at “the great resurrection” are found to need

¹ *Ibid.* xxxv. : Οὐ γὰρ ὅσα δι' ἀναστάσεως τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ εἶναι πάλιν ἐπάνοδον δέχεται, πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν ἐπάνεισι βίον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ τὸ μέσον τῶν τε κεκαθαμένων καὶ τῶν τοῦ καθαρσίου προσδεομένων ἐστίν. 'Εφ' ὧν γὰρ κατὰ τὸν βίον τοῦτον ἡ διὰ τοῦ λουτροῦ προκαθηγήσατο κῆδαισι, πρὸς τὸ συγγενὲς τοῖσις ἡ ἀναχώρησις ἐσται. . . . οἱς δὲ προσεπωρόθη τὰ πάθη καὶ οὐδὲν προσήχθη τῆς κηλίδος καθάρσιον, οὐχ ὕδωρ μυστικόν, οὐκ ἐπίκλησις θέας δυνάμεις, οὐχ ἡ ἐκ μεταμελείας διόρθωσις, ἀνάγκη πᾶσα καὶ τούτους ἐν τῷ καταλλήλῳ γενέσθαι· κατὰλληλον δὲ τῷ κεκιβδηλευμένῳ χρυσίῳ τὸ χωνευτήριον, ὡς τῆς ἐμμιχθείσης αὐτοῖς κακίας ἀποτακείσης μακροῖς ὕστερον αἰῶσι καθαρὰν ἀποσωθῆναι τῷ θεῷ τὴν φύσιν. 'Επεὶ οὖν βυπτικῇ τίς ἐστι δύναμις ἐν τῷ πυρὶ καὶ τῷ ὕδατι, οἱ διὰ τοῦ ὕδατος τοῦ μυστικοῦ τὸν τῆς κακίας ῥύπον ἀποκλυσόμενοι τοῦ ἐτέρου τῶν καθαρῶν εἶδους οὐκ ἐπιδέονται· οἱ δὲ ταύτης ἀμύητοι τῆς καθάρσεως ἀναγκαίως τῷ πυρὶ καθαρίζονται.

cleansing—that he says that the appropriate place for them is the refiner's fire. His expression "long ages hereafter" would of itself be enough to show that he was not thinking of a discipline in the intermediate state; and he evidently does not suppose that it will be applied to the ordinary Christian who, though faulty, retains his baptismal grace.

This is all that there is to be gathered on the subject from the ancient Greek theologians. A phrase in Basil,¹ a phrase in Gregory of Nazianzus,² shows that they shared to some extent the belief of their brother and friend. They hold the fear that the Christian, if he is careless, may come to need a terrible cleansing at the last day. They do not contemplate its application to the average Christian, to those who have committed only light and venial sins. They make no distinction between that cleansing and the hell of the lost. But the subject is not pursued. Harnack is right when

¹ In *Isaiam*, ix. 554.

² *Or.* xxxix. 19: Τυχὸν ἐκεῖ τῷ πυρὶ βαπτισθήσονται, τῷ τελειοτάτῳ βαπτίσματι, τῷ ἐπιπονωτέρῳ καὶ μακροτέρῳ.

he says that the Greek Fathers dropped the idea.¹ It does not occur in Athanasius and the Alexandrians. It barely occurs in Chrysostom and the Antiochenes, in much the same form as in Basil or in Gregory.² To Theodoret the fire which burns up the wood, hay, and stubble is the fire of the Day of Judgment.³ John of Damascus knows nothing of it. At the Council

¹ *Hist. of Dogma*, iii. p. 189 (English tr.), note 1.

² The men for whom Chrysostom, in *Act. Apost.* hom. xxi. p. 169 (Migne), urges that prayers and alms should be offered are evidently regarded as lost. There is nothing to suggest that they are undergoing a curative process which can be hastened by the efforts of their friends. "Well may we lament for them! When they stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, what will be said to them! what will be done to them! They have lived in vain; nay, worse than in vain—for evil. It may be said of them, 'It were good for them that they had never been born.' . . . Shall we not lament for such an one? tell me. Shall we not endeavour to snatch him from his perils? It is possible—I say, it is possible, if we will—to lighten his punishment. If we make continual prayers for him, if we give alms, unworthy though *he* is, God will be prevailed upon by *us*. . . . Many have profited by the alms done on their behalf by others. They have found some degree of consolation even if they have not found it completely." Cyril of Jerusalem in the same way says that we propitiate God by our prayers and sacrifices for the deceased even if they be sinners (*Cat. Myst.* v. 9). In each case, it is a mitigation or a release from hell that these Fathers have in view.

³ Upon 1 *Cor.* iii.

of Florence in 1439, the Greeks, after setting forth at Ferrara a series of propositions in which the doctrine of Purgatory was rejected, came to terms with the Latins; but the compromise was not ratified by the acceptance of the East.¹ It is only since that period that the doctrine of Purgatory, in a modified form, has been authoritatively accepted and taught among them.²

¹ Creighton, *Papacy*, ii. pp. 336, 346; Popoff, *Council of Florence*, pp. 49 foll., 142.

² The *Confessio Orthodoxa* answers the question, "How ought we to conceive of the purgatorial fire?" by saying that no Scripture speaks of a temporal and purgatorial punishment after death, and that the opinion of Origen on the subject had been rejected by the Second Council of Constantinople. "The Church," it adds, "rightly offers the unbloody Sacrifice for [souls that have died in sin, and so would be lost but for such aid], and prays God for the forgiveness of their sins; but not that they may suffer a little punishment and so be cleansed" (οὐδεμία γραφή διαλαμβάνει περὶ αὐτοῦ, νὰ εὕρεται δηλαδὴ κἀν μίᾳ πρόσκαιρος κόλασις, καθαρτικὴ τῶν ψυχῶν ὥστερα ἀπὸ τὸν θάνατον . . . ἡ ἐκκλησία μὲ δικαιοσύνην προσφέρει δι' αὐτὰς τὴν ἀναιμακτον θυσίαν, καὶ προσευχὰς πρὸς θεὸν πέμπει ὑπὲρ ἀφέσεως τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν· μὰ ὅχι ἐκείνοι νὰ πάσχουσιν κἀν μίαν κόλασιν, καὶ μετ' αὐτὴν νὰ καθαρίζονται). The article proceeds to say that the Church has never accepted "the fables of some" who affirm that souls that have died without penance are punished in quagmires and lakes (Kimmel, *Monumenta Fidei Eccl. Or.* p. 136). Cp. Macarius, *Théologie Dogmatique*

The doctrine of a purgatorial discipline hereafter was not seriously taken up in the West till it had ceased to be actively taught in the East, and it there assumed an entirely different shape. The passages of Tertullian and of Cyprian which have been supposed to prepare the way for it, in reality contribute nothing. Tertullian speaks, indeed, of some who are saved having to "pay the last farthing" after death ; but the only way known to him in which this can be done is "by the postponement of their resurrection ;"¹ there is no suggestion of either

Orthodoxe, vol. ii. p. 725 foll. (French transl.) ; Guettée, *Exposition de la Doctrine Orthodoxe*, p. 55 foll.

¹ *De Anima*, 58 : *In summa carcerem illum, quem evangelium demonstrat, inferos intellegimus, et nouissimum quadrantem modicum quoque delictum mora resurrectionis illic luendum interpretamur.* The case of Perpetua and her brother is often cited as a proof that the doctrine of Purgatory was known and held in North Africa at the beginning of the third century. Even such painstaking students as Atzberger (*Eschatologie*, p. 333) and Kirsch (*Gemeinschaft der Heiligen im chr. Alterthum*, p. 109 foll.) allow themselves to speak of it in such terms. The fact is that the young Dinocrates, as Perpetua distinctly says, had died unbaptized. He was therefore, according to the belief of the time, in hell. Not a word is said to indicate that the child's sufferings were of a cleansing character. Had such been the belief, there would have been nothing unusual in Perpetua's praying for him ; but she evidently regards it as a

pain or purification in the time of waiting. The similarity of Cyprian's language to that of Purgatory is a sign that the doctrine of Purgatory was not known to him. Had he known it, he could not have applied its terminology so closely to other forms of corrective discipline.¹

strange and, but for the miraculous indication given to her, a most presumptuous thing to pray for him. The prayers of the Church were only for the faithful departed, of whom Dinocrates was not one. Her intercession for him was as abnormal as the prayer of Gregory the Great for the soul of Trajan.

¹ *Ep. lv. 20*: (Hartel) *Aliud est adueniam stare, aliud ad gloriam peruenire; aliud missum in carcerem non exire inde donec soluat nouissimum quadrantem, aliud statim fidei et uirtutis accipere mercedem; aliud pro peccatis longo dolore cruciatum emundari et purgari diu igne, aliud peccata omnia passione purgasse; aliud denique pendere in die iudicii ad sententiam Domini, aliud statim a Domino coronari.* It is difficult to decide whether Cyprian is speaking of purgatory or not. At first sight it would appear that he is. But the contrast is not between two men who die, the one a martyr and the other a sinner. The contrast is between the man who dies a martyr and passes at once to his glory, and the man who has been false to his faith and still lives upon earth, under the penitential discipline of the Church, not yet absolved, and not certain that he ever will be. The description of the severity of the discipline may seem exaggerated; but it is quite in Cyprian's vein, and it is to his interest in the argument against Novatianism to represent it as being exceedingly strict. The Novatianist argues that to hold out a hope of pardon on earth to the lapsed will encourage men to fall; Cyprian argues that the hope held out, though sufficient, is not one of easy indulgence.

Origen's doctrine of cleansing punishments at the last day found, it is true, occasional expression among Latin teachers who had learned from the East. Lactantius, who considers that the Judgment is only for Christians, says that the righteous will be examined by fire, which will touch closely those of them whose sins outweigh their good deeds, but will do no harm to those whose righteousness is complete.¹ Hilary thought it a dangerous thing for us to "desire God's judgments" as the Psalmist does. "Since no man living is clean in His sight, how can His judgment be desired? We shall have to give account of every idle word; how then can we desire the Day of Judgment, when we shall have to undergo that unwearied fire, in which souls that are to have their sins expiated must undergo such grave punishments?" He considers that even the Virgin Mary must then

¹ *Inst. vii. : Sed et iustos cum indicaverit, etiam igni eos examinabit, tum quorum peccata vel pondere vel numero praevaluerint, perstringentur ab igni atque amburentur : quos autem plena iustitia et maturitas virtutis incoxerit, ignem illum non sentient.* Lactantius leaves it uncertain what becomes, at the judgment, of those whose virtue is still imperfect, though their sins do not outweigh their good deeds.

submit to have her soul pierced with the sword.¹ Ambrose adopted yet more completely the teaching and language of Origen. "We shall all be tried with fire," he exclaims. "The sons of Levi, Ezechiel"—to whom he attributes the prophecy of Malachi—"Daniel, all shall be purified with fire. But these, although tried with fire, will be able to say, 'We have passed through fire and water.' Others will remain in the fire; but for them, as for the Hebrew children who were cast into the burning fiery furnace, the fire will become like dew, while its avenging flame will burn up the servants of ungodliness. Woe is me if my work is to be burned up, and I suffer the loss of this my labour! Even though the Lord shall save His servants, we shall be saved through faith, and only so as by fire; and if we be not burned up, yet we shall be burned."² We have all touched

¹ In *Psalms*. cxviii. liti. iii. 12 : *An cum ex omni otioso uerbo rationem simus praestituri, diem iudicii concupiscemus, in quo nobis est ille indefessus ignis subeundus, in quo subeunda sunt gravia illa expiandae a peccatis animae supplicia?* Cp. *ibid.* 5. *Quae iudicii igni nos decoquat.*

² In *Psalms*. xxxvi. 26 : *Omnes igne examinabimur . . . igne purgabuntur filii Levi, igne Ezechiel, igne Daniel, sed hi etsi per*

the dead, he says, and all need purifying. There is yet a baptism to undergo—a baptism at the threshold of Paradise which was not there at the beginning; but ever since the sinner was cast out, the flaming sword which God placed there has kept its station, to purify those who desire to return to Paradise. This baptism is to take place at the end of the world, when the angels are sent out to separate the good from the bad. Even a saint like Peter or John—here Ambrose uses the very phraseology of Origen—is baptized with this fire. He prays that it may come and purify us now; yet even when purified here, we need a further purification there, before we can enter into rest. Ambrose proceeds to distinguish between this purifying fire prepared by the Lord Jesus for His servants, which destroys their involuntary and accidental sins, and that

ignem examinabuntur, dicent tamen, "Transuimus per ignem et aquam," alii in igne remanebunt: illis rorabit ignis, ut Hebræis pueris qui incendio fornacis ardentis obiecti sunt; ministros autem impietatis ultor ignis exuret. Vae mihi si opus meum arserit, et laboris huius patiar detrimentum! etsi saluos faciet Dominus seruos suos, salui erimus per fidem, sic tamen quasi per ignem; et si non exurimur, tamen uremur.

eternal fire into which the devil and his angels are sent; but the distinction is not made very plain. In any case the purification is not before the day of Judgment.¹ Jerome, the foe of Origen and his admirers, adopts so far the views of Origen. He inveighs against the harsh interpretation which Pelagius set upon the texts declaring that the wicked will be for ever destroyed at the Day of Judgment. He affirms, as if he supposed it to be the accepted belief, that "Christians who have been cut off in sin will be saved after punishment."²

But this, which was the doctrine of the Eastern Fathers with regard to a purgatorial discipline after death, is a totally and entirely different doctrine from that which since the time of Jerome has gained acceptance in the West. The Western

¹ In *Psalm*. cxviii. *litt.* liii. 12 foll. (see esp. 17): *Alius iste est ignis quo exuruntur peccata non voluntaria sed fortuita, quem paravit seruis suis Dominus Iesus, ut eos . . . emundet; alius ille ignis quem deputavit diabolo et angelis eius.* Ambrose repeats the same teaching on letter xx. 12 foll., where he says that those who have had the fire of charity here will not need to fear the fire there.

² *Adv. Pelag.* i. 28: *Dicimus . . . christianos, si in peccato praeventi fuerint, salvandos esse post poenas.* Cp. *adv. Rufin.* li. 7; in *Is.* lxvi. *ad fin.*

doctrine owes its origin, so far as can now be traced, to the speculations of a single master mind.

Augustine is the first of the Fathers to enunciate his belief in a purgatory proper—a purgatory previous to the Judgment Day ; and in doing so, he shows incidentally how much diversity of opinion with regard to such subjects existed in his time, and that there was no constant or authoritative tradition about them in the Church.

The most important passages in which he deals with the conception of a purgatory are four.

Preaching upon the words, "Put me not to rebuke, O Lord, in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy heavy displeasure," he argues that the Psalmist, already as deep in affliction as he could be upon earth, must be looking on to the possibility of a worse affliction to come hereafter, and deprecating it. "Perhaps," he says, not all who after this life are "put to rebuke" will be effectually "chastened," while some will be saved by means of it. The verse is a prayer

that God will purify us in this life, and make us such that we may not need that chastening appointed for those who are saved, yet so as by fire. There is, therefore, a chastening fire for some after death. There are men, Augustine says, who think lightly of that fire, because a hope of salvation is attached to it; "and yet," he says, relying upon his view of the Psalmist's actual condition, "that fire will be more severe than anything which a man can suffer in this life." Austin carefully distinguishes this fire from the fire of hell, which will to all eternity burn up the ungodly; but it is appalling to think what consequences have historically sprung out of that one incidental remark of his that the purgatorial fire exceeds in severity the extremest sufferings of this life.¹

¹ *Enarr. in Psalm. xxxvii. 3: Futurum est enim ut quidam in ira Dei emendentur et in indignatione arguantur, et forte non omnes qui arguantur emendabuntur: sed tamen futuri sunt in emendatione quidam salvi. Futurum est quidem, quia emendatio nominata est; sic tamen quasi per ignem. Futuri autem quidam qui arguentur et non emendabuntur... Haec iste... formidans... dicit, Non sim inter illos quibus dicturus es, "Ite in ignem aeternum;"... neque in ira tua emendes me; ut in hac vita purges me, et talem me reddas, cui iam emendatorio igne non opus sit, propter illos qui salvi erunt, sic tamen quasi per ignem. Quare, nisi quia*

In the three other passages to which I refer, Austin discusses at length the meaning of St. Paul's words about being saved yet so as by fire. It has been supposed by some students¹ that his words are a criticism, though a respectful one, upon the language of Jerome which I have quoted. If they are not directed against Jerome himself, they are, at any rate, directed against the opinion which Jerome expressed—that all Christians would ultimately be saved, although Christians cut off in sin would only be saved after punishment. Austin shrinks from the task of interpreting the Apostle's language. "I confess," he says, "that I would rather hear abler and more learned men explain the text ; but it must be a preliminary condition that they should interpret it without making it contradict the scriptural principle, that none are saved who

hic aedificant supra fundamentum ligna, fenum, stipulam ? Aedificarent autem aurum, argentum, lapides pretiosos, et de utroque igne securi essent ; non solum de illo aeterno qui in aeternum cruciaturus est impios, sed etiam de illo qui emendabit eos qui per ignem salvi erunt. . . . Et quia dicitur, "Salvus erit," contemnitur ille ignis. Ita plane quamvis salvi per ignem, gravior tamen erit ille ignis, quam quidquid potest homo pati in hac vita.

¹ See the Benedictine editors' note on the passage.

have not at bottom the faith that worketh by love." With the correctness of Austin's actual exegesis of the "foundation" and of the "wood, hay, stubble" built upon it, I am not now concerned. Building of that kind he thinks is the undue clinging to the good things of this world, even though they be lawfully acquired. After showing how the "fire" may be applied during this life, Austin proceeds: "Whether, therefore, men undergo such sufferings in this life only, or whether some such judgments follow also after this life, I do not think this view of the passage to conflict with truth and reason."¹ His

¹ *De Fide et Operibus*, 24, after quoting I Cor. iii. 11-15, Austin proceeds: *Quod quidam ita intellegendum putant, ut illi uideantur aedificare super hoc fundamentum aurum argentum lapides pretiosos, qui fidei quae in Christo est bona opera adiciunt; illi autem fenum ligna stipulam, qui, cum eandem fidem habeant, male operantur, unde arbitrantur per quasdam poenas ignis eos posse purgari ad salutem percipiendam merito fundamenti.* Were this the case, he says, 25, it would be right and charitable to baptize everybody; even, for instance, harlots who persist in a life of sin. *Quis enim non malit eas posito fundamento, licet ligna fenum et stipulam congerant, aliquanto certe diuturniore igne purgari, quam in aeternum perire?* He shows that persistent sinners are threatened with eternal fire. *Neque illud dici hic poterit, in quo nonnulli se ipsos seducunt dicentes, ignem aeternum dictum, non ipsam poenam aeternam, per ignem quippe,*

main solicitude is lest a vain hope should be held out to Christians of being saved by a

qui aeternus erit, transitorios arbitrantur eos, . . . ut uidelicet ipse ignis aeternus sit, combustio uero eorum, hoc est operatio ignis, non sit in eos aeterna. 27. *Hic a me fortasse quaeratur, de ipsa Pauli apostoli sententia quid ego sentiam, et quonam modo intellegendam putem. Fateor, hinc malletm audire intellegentiores atque doctiores, qui sic eam exponant ut illa omnia uero et inconcussa permaneant . . . quibus apertissime scriptura testatur . . . sine operibus [fidem] saluare non posse, neque praeter ignem, neque per ignem: quia si per ignem saluat, itaque utique saluat.* If the rich young ruler, at Christ's bidding, had renounced his wealth, caring only for the things of the Lord, how he might please the Lord, that "caring" would have been "gold, silver, precious stone." *Si circa diuitias suas carnali quodam teneretur affectu, quamuis ex eis multas eleemosynas faceret, nec ad eas augendas fraudis aliquid rapinaeque moliretur, aut earum minuendarum uel amittendarum metu in aliquod facinus flagitiumue laberetur (alioquin iam se isto modo ab illius fundamenti stabilitate subtraheret), sed propter carnalem, ut dixi, quem in eis haberet affectum, quo talibus bonis sine dolore carere non posset, aedificaret super fundamentum illud ligna fenum stipulam;*—then follows the account of the sorrows and losses in this life which Austin thinks may have been in the mind of the Apostle when he spoke of the "fire" by which such a man may be saved. 29. *Siue ergo in hac tantum uita ista homines patiuntur, siue etiam post hanc uitam talia quaedam iudicia subsequuntur, non abhorret, quantum arbitror, a ratione ueritatis iste intellectus huiusce sententiae. Verum tamen si est alius, qui mihi non occurrit, potius eligendus, istum quamdiu tenemus, non cogimur dicere iniustus . . . "Si tantum modo in Christum credatis, et sacramentum baptismi eius accipiat, etiamsi uitam istam pessimam non mutaueritis, salui eritis."*

D

purgatorial fire hereafter without endeavouring to live well here.

In the *Enchiridion* Austin repeats what he had said in the *De Fide et Operibus*. He says that the fire may be the fire of tribulation; and then he adds, "That something of the kind may befall also after this life, is not beyond belief. The question may, at any rate, be asked whether it be so. We may find, or we may fail to find, that some of the faithful, by means of a purgatorial fire, are saved more or less speedily in proportion as they have cared more or less for the good things that perish; but none will be saved of whom it is said that 'they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'"¹

¹ *Enchir. ad Laurent.* lxvii. foll. : *Qui hoc credunt, et tamen catholici sunt, humana quidem benevolentia mihi falli videntur; nam scriptura divina aliud consilia respondet. . . . Ligna quippe et fenum et stipula non absurde accipi possunt rerum saecularium, quamvis licite concessarum, tales cupiditates, ut amitti sine animi dolore non possint. Cum autem iste dolor urit, si Christus in corde fundamenti habet locum, id est, ut ei nihil anteponatur, et malit homo, qui tali dolore uritur, rebus quas ita diligit magis carere quam Christo, per ignem fit saluus. . . . Est quidam ignis temptatio tribulationis (Ecclus. xxvii. 6) . . . iste ignis in hac interim vita facit quod apostolus dixit. . . . Tale aliquid etiam post hanc vitam fieri incredibile non est; et utrum ita sit, quaeri potest, et aut inueniri, aut latere, nonnullos fideles per ignem quandam*

So far, Austin leaves it open to suppose that he agrees with earlier teachers in placing the purgatorial fire in connexion with the Judgment of the last day. The text from 1 Corinthians would seem to involve it. But this notion is expressly set aside in the fourth passage, at the end of the *De Civitate Dei*. There, combating the doctrine of the Platonists and of Vergil with regard to punishments, Austin denies that all punishments are remedial or purgatorial. "Temporal punishments," he says—and for the moment he speaks more dogmatically than he did before—"are endured by some in this life only, by some after death, by some both now and then—only before the last dread judgment. Not all who suffer temporal punishments after death, come to the everlasting punishments which will follow upon that judgment. For some who are not forgiven in this world, are forgiven in the world to come, that is, that they may not be punished

purgatorium, quanto magis minusve bona peruentia dilexerunt, tanto tardius citiusque saluari: non tamen tales de quibus dictum est, quod regnum Dei non possidebunt, nisi conuenienter paenitentibus eadem crimina remittantur.

with the eternal torment of the world to come.”¹ “Let a man think that only before the last tremendous Judgment will there be any purgatorial punishments.”² “At the resurrection of the dead, there will be some to whom, after the punishments which the spirits of the dead endure, mercy will be shown, in their not being sent into eternal fire. For it would be misleading to say of some, that they are neither forgiven in this world nor in the next, unless there were others who are not forgiven in this world, but are forgiven in the next.”³

¹ *De Ciuit. Dei*, xxi. 13: *Nos uero etiam in hac quidem mortali uita esse quasdam poenas purgatorias confitemur, non quibus affliguntur quorum uita uel non inde fit melior, uel potius inde fit peior; sed illis sunt purgatorie, qui eis coerciti corriguntur . . . sed temporarias poenas alii in hac uita tantum, alii post mortem, alii et nunc et tunc, uerum tamen ante iudicium illud seuerissimum nouissimumque, patiuntur. Non autem omnes ueniunt in sempiternas poenas, quae post illud iudicium sunt futurae, qui post mortem sustinent temporales. Nam quibusdam, quod in isto non remittitur, remitti in futuro saeculo (Matt. xii. 32), id est, ne futuri saeculi aeterno supplicio puniantur, iam supra diximus.*

² *Ibid.* 16: *Purgatorias autem poenas nullas futuras opindur, nisi ante illud ultimum tremendumque iudicium.*

³ *Ibid.* 24: *Sicut etiam facta resurrectione mortuorum non deerunt quibus post poenas, quas patiuntur spiritus mortuorum, impertiatu misericordia, ut in ignem non mittantur aeternum.*

Once more Austin goes through his interpretation of the text about the wood, hay, stubble. He attempts to show that the fire there spoken of cannot be the eternal fire into which the wicked are cast at the Judgment Day, because St. Paul speaks of "each man's work" being tried by it, and not only that of those who have built in the wrong material. He enumerates the ways in which the fire may try us—in the death of the flesh, in time of persecution, in the last tribulation of the days of Antichrist. When he comes to speak of the purifying process after death, his language becomes again tentative and doubtful—the language of a man who is feeling his way towards a truth which rests upon no sure tradition of the Church. "After the death of this body," he says, "until we come to the last day of condemnation and reward which follows the resurrection of our bodies—if in this interval of time the spirits of the departed

Neque enim de quibusdam ueraciter diceretur, quod non eis remittatur neque in hoc saeculo neque in futuro, nisi essent quibus etsi non in isto tamen remittetur in futuro.

are said to suffer such a fire—not to be felt by those whose characters and affections in this bodily life have not required the burning of their wood, hay, stubble, but to be felt by others who have brought with them that kind of building—whether only here they find the fire of transitory tribulation to burn up their worldly and yet pardonable things, or whether they find it there, or find it here that they may not find it there—I do not dispute it, for perhaps it may be true.”¹

Austin was the first to distinguish clearly in this way between purgatory and hell—hell retributive and purgatory corrective; hell never ending and purgatory ending with the Judgment Day; hell for the unchristian world and for great

¹ *De Civit. Dei*, xxi. 26: *Post istius sane corporis mortem, donec ad illum veniatur qui post resurrectionem corporum futurus est damnationis et remunerationis ultimus dies, si hoc temporis intervallo spiritus defunctorum eiusmodi ignem dicuntur perpeti, quem non sentiant illi qui non habuerunt tales mores et amores in huius corporis vita ut eorum ligna senum stipula consumatur, alii vero sentiant qui eiusmodi secum aedificia portauerunt, siue ibi tantum, siue et hic et ibi, siue ideo hic ut non ibi, saecularia quamvis a damnatione venialia concrenantem ignem transitoriae tribulationis inueniant, non redarguo, quia forsitan uerum est.*

sinners among Christians, purgatory for Christians who in spite of weaknesses have been true at bottom to their faith. That he himself believed the existence of such a purgatory is clear; yet he treats it only as an opinion, which "perhaps is true." He "will not dispute it." It is to him "not beyond belief." The one thing which concerns him most is to show that such a purgatory, if it exists, is not for Christians who are without a living faith. It is his deliberate correction of the teaching of earlier Christian writers. He throws it out as a kind of concession, the possible truth which had been misrepresented by their purgatorial hell.

The influence of Austin was sufficient to establish that opinion.¹ Nevertheless it was still no more than an opinion when Gregory the Great took the question up. "I should like to be taught," says the feebly docile disciple in Gregory's *Dialogues*, "whether we are to believe that there is a purgatorial fire after death." Evidently the belief was no part of the Catholic

¹ Cp. Caesarius of Arles, *Hom.* 8; *Dial.* 4, resp. ad int. 185.

tradition, but a matter of interesting inquiry. Gregory was not an Austin, and his belief was largely built upon the thrilling ghost-stories which form so considerable a part of his *Dialogues*. Nevertheless his answer to the docile Peter is in itself reasonable enough. He begins by warning him that there can be no fundamental change of character after this life is over; as the man dies, so is he at the judgment. "Yet for some slight sins," he says, "we should believe that there is before the judgment a purgatorial fire," otherwise—as Austin had said—there would be no meaning in our Lord's words about having no forgiveness either in this world or in the world to come. "But as I said before," he pursues, "this can only be believed possible for little and slight sins, such as continual trifling talk, immoderate laughter, or sinful anxiety in home-life . . . or errors of ignorance in matters of no great moment; all of which weigh upon the soul even after death, if not forgiven during this life." Gregory then quotes the stock text, "so as by fire," and continues, "Although it is possible to understand this text

of the application to us of the fire of tribulation in this life, yet if any one should take it of the fire of a purgation to come, it must be carefully remembered that he only is said to be capable of salvation by fire . . . who builds upon this foundation . . . wood, hay, stubble ; that is, very slight and inconsiderable sins, which the fire can easily consume. But observe that no man will obtain there any purgation of even slight sins, unless in this life he has deserved to obtain it by good actions.”¹

¹ *Dial. iv. 39* : *Constat quia qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in iudicio praesentatur. Sed tamen de quibusdam leuibus culpis esse ante iudicium purgatorius ignis credendus est, pro eo quod Veritas dicit quia si quis in sancto Spiritu blasphemiam dixerit, neque in hoc saeculo remittetur ei neque in futuro. In qua sententia datur intellegi quasdam culpas in hoc saeculo, quasdam in futuro posse laxari. Quod enim de uno negatur, consequens intellectus patet, quia de quibusdam conceditur. Sed tamen, ut praedixi, hoc de paruis minimisque peccatis fieri posse credendum est, sicut est assiduus otiosus sermo, immoderatus risus, uel peccatum curae rei familiaris, quae uix sine culpa uel ab ipsis agitur qui culpam qualiter declinare debeant sciunt ; aut in non grauibz rebus error ignorantiae ; quae cuncta etiam post mortem grauant, si adhuc in hac uita positae minime fuerint relaxata. Nam cum Paulus dicat Christum esse fundamentum, atque subiungat, “ Si quis (1 Cor. iii. 12, etc.),” quamuis hoc de igne tribulationis in hac nobis uita adhibito possit intellegi, tamen si quis hoc de igne futurae purgationis accipiat, pensandum sollicitè est quia illum*

It is perhaps somewhat amusing to find that among the "errors of ignorance in matters of no great moment" which are punished in purgatory Gregory includes an obstinate adherence to the wrong Pope. The story by which he illustrates his theory is that of Paschasius the deacon, who persisted in supporting Lawrence against Symmachus. For this he was punished after death—German, Bishop of Capua, saw him and was personally served by him—by having to stand and work in the hot atmosphere of the baths at Angulus. His good deeds in life, however, were sufficient to procure his release after a time when joined to the intercessions of German, and he was ultimately canonized.¹

After the story of Paschasius, Peter, who has listened to a vast number of tales which I commend to the Society for Psychical Research,

per ignem dixit posse saluari, non qui super hoc fundamentum ferrum aes uel plumbum aedificat, id est, peccata maiora et idcirco duriora atque tunc iam insolubilia, sed ligna fenum stipulam, id est peccata minima atque leuissima, quae ignis facile consumat. Hoc tamen sciendum est, quia illic saltem de minimis nihil quisque purgationis obtinebit, nisi bonis hoc actibus in hac adhuc uita positus ut illic obtineat promereatur.

¹ *Dial.* iv. 40 ; cp. 55.

naïvely inquires how it comes about that so much is known about souls nowadays that was not known before.¹ And truly a whole flood of new light purported to have been thrown upon the conditions of the dead by recent apparitions and revelations. It could not be pretended that either Scripture or ancient tradition had taught what now began to be believed. The doctrine of Purgatory as it was known in the Middle Ages was constructed in part out of the speculations of Austin, but more out of the blood-curdling tales of Gregory; which in turn prepared the way for ampler visions of the punishments of the unseen world. Even Thomas Aquinas was led to base his teaching, to a great extent, not only upon the occurrences vouched for by Gregory the Great, but also, as he says, upon "revelations made to many."²

¹ *Ibid.* 41 : *Quid hoc est, quaeso, quod in his extremis temporibus tam multa de animabus clarescunt quas ante latuerunt, ita ut apertis revelationibus atque ostensionibus venturum saeculum inferre se nobis atque aperire uideatur?*

² In *Sent.* IV. dist. xxi. qu. 1, art. 1, sol. 2 : *Consonat magis sanctorum dictis et revelationi factae multis.* The words will be found on p. 852 of vol. vii. of the Parma edition of 1857.

It is well known that our English Article, as first drawn up, rejected, as a fond thing vainly invented, "the doctrine of the School authors" concerning purgatory, and that afterwards for "the doctrine of the School authors" was substituted "the Romish doctrine."¹ The doctrine of the School authors is best represented by Aquinas in his commentary upon the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard; but before examining it, we may do well to note what Peter Lombard himself had to add to the material which he had gathered from Austin and from Gregory—the only Fathers whom he quotes in this part of his work.

It is highly instructive that the discussion of the subject in the Master of the *Sentences* is not placed in connexion with eschatological questions in general, but under the heading of the Sacrament of Penance. This is the point of view from which the doctrine of Purgatory is approached by the School authors.

Peter Lombard sees the objection that if

¹ See Hardwick, *Articles of Religion*, p. 304 (ed. 1859). The change was made in 1563.

St. Paul's "wood, hay, stubble" are to be interpreted as venial sins, then those who build "gold, silver, precious stone," build "wood, hay, stubble" likewise, and so must go through the fire; because all commit venial sins. In like manner the builders of wood, hay, stubble, build also gold, silver, precious stone, because those materials are respectively the contemplation of God, the love of one's neighbour, and good works; and these enter into the life of every one who is saved. His answer is that the two classes differ in the main motive of their life, not so much in the particular actions which they perform. The men whose whole study is how to please God and not the world may commit venial sins; but the fire of charity which is in them at once consumes those sins, like a drop of water in the furnace, and so they bear nothing with them out of life that can be burned.¹ The others carry with them to the end their clinging attachment to earthly,

¹ Lib. IV. dist. xxi.: *Oppositio: Etsi venialiter aliquando peccant, feruore tamen caritatis ita obsumitur in eis peccatum, sicut gutta aquae in camino ignis; et ideo numquam secum portant cremabilia.*

though innocent things, along with their desire to please God ; and so their venial sins remain to be consumed by penal fires elsewhere.

To this is added another possible objection. A distinction is drawn between the sin itself and the punishment of the sin. It is suggested that what is, according to Gregory, remitted after death is the punishment of the venial sins, and not the venial sins themselves. To be saved at all, a man must die penitent, and therefore forgiven all his sins, venial or otherwise, and there would remain nothing but the punishment of his venial sins to get remitted hereafter, which presumably would be very small. But Peter Lombard replies that penitence does not do away with venial sins ; it only does away with the sins which a man forsakes, and the men in question do not forsake or repent of their venial sins, or not of all of them. The venial sins themselves therefore remain. If "the authors" had meant that only the punishments remained to be got over, why, he asks, did they specify the punishments of venial sins, when as a matter of fact the punishment of

grave sins also—or at least the balance of it—remains to be worked off after this life is over?¹

These are the ideas which Aquinas takes up and developes. Arguing from a famous text in Maccabees² which encourages prayer for the forgiveness of the departed, he shows that there must be such a thing as cleansing after death. When the guilt of sin is blotted out by contrition, it does not follow that the liability to punishment is removed. The forgiveness of mortal sins does not necessarily imply the forgiveness of venial sins. God's justice demands that sin shall be balanced by its due punishment. Therefore a man who dies contrite and absolved, but before he has made due satisfaction for all his sins, must be punished after death. To deny purgatory is to speak against the justice of God.³

¹ *Ibid.*: *Opinio quorundam: Si uero de poena peccati illud intellegi uoluissent auctores, cur magis commemorassent leuia quam grasia, cum etiam grarium poena hic inexplata post hanc uitam restet?*

² 2 Macc. xii. 46.

³ In *Sent.* IV. dist. xxi. qu. 1, art. 1, sol. 1 (p. 851): *Si enim per contritionem deleta culpa non tollitur ex toto reatus*

Aquinas feels bound to deal with certain subsidiary questions which had not engaged the attention of Peter Lombard. With regard to the situation of purgatory, he remarks truly enough that Scripture makes no express statement; but probably the general purgatory is close to hell, though not so low, and the fire in both is the same. For particular souls, like Gregory's Paschasius, the scene of punishment is for some special reason laid elsewhere. There is this difference between hell and purgatory, besides the length of time that is spent in them respectively, that the sole purpose of hell is to afflict, whereas the principal, though not the sole, purpose of purgatory is to purge out the remains of sin. For this reason hell may be described by many forms of suffering, but fire alone gives a correct description of purgatory.

poenas, nec etiam semper uenialia dimissis mortalibus tolluntur, et iustitia Dei hoc exigit ut peccatum per poenam debitam ordinetur; oportet quod ille, qui post contritionem de peccato et absolutionem decedit ante satisfactionem debitam, post hanc vitam puniatur; et ideo illi qui purgatorium negant, contra divinam iustitiam loquuntur, et propter hoc erroneum est et a fide alienum.

The nature of the purgatorial punishment is described by Aquinas with great subtlety and beauty, upon which the mighty mind of Dante seized, and embodied it in his august verse. It is twofold. There is negatively the *poena damni*, the withholding of the sight of God, for which the soul longs with a fearful intensity of desire, conscious that with the removal of the bodily hindrances, it ought to be able to see Him, and that through its own fault the sight is delayed ; and there is positively the *poena sensus*, to which the soul, which gave sensitiveness even to the body, is itself immeasurably more sensitive than the body. For both reasons, the pain of purgatory exceeds, as Austin had said, any pain that can be endured in this life.¹ In one sense the pain is

¹ In *Sent.* IV. dist. xxi. qu. 1, art. 1, sol. 3: *Ad tertiam quaestionem dicendum, quod in purgatorio erit duplex poena: una damni, inquantum scilicet retardantur a divina uisione; alia sensus, secundum quod ab igne corporali punientur; et quantum ad utrumque poena purgatorii minima excedit maximam poenam huius uitae. Quanto enim aliquid magis desideratur, tanto eius absentia est molestior. Et quia affectus quo desideratur summum bonum post hanc uitam in animabus sanctis est intensissimus, quia non retardatur affectus mole corporis, et etiam quia terminus fruendi summo bono iam aduenisset nisi aliquid*

voluntary, as being a means to an end; but souls desire to have done with it, or they would not beg people to pray that they may be released from it, "as they frequently do;" and their doing so shows that they know that they will at some time be delivered.¹ The punishment is inflicted by the Divine justice alone,—not by devils, nor by angels; but it may be that angels take souls to the place of punishment, and that devils accompany them, and stand by to gloat over their pains.

The doctrine of the Schoolmen has taken an immense stride beyond the doctrine of Austin and of Gregory. Besides being positive and

impediret, ideo de tardatione maxime dolent. Similiter etiam cum dolor non sit laesio, sed laesionis sensus, tanto aliquis magis dolet de aliquo laesivo, quanto magis est sensitivum; unde laesiones quae fiunt in locis maxime sensibilibus sunt maximum dolorem causantes. Et quia totus sensus corporis est ab anima, ideo si in ipsam animam aliquod laesivum agat, de necessitate oportet quod maxime affligatur. . . . Et ideo oportet quod poena purgatorii quantum ad poenam damni et sensus excedat omnem poenam istius vitae.

¹ In *Sent.* IV. dist. xxi. qu. 1, art. 1, sol. 4: *Quidam autem dicunt quod non est aliquo modo voluntaria, quia sunt ita absorpti poenis quod nesciunt se per poenam purgari, sed putant se esse damnatos. Sed hoc falsum; quia nisi scirent se liberandos, suffragia non peterent, quod frequenter faciunt.*

dogmatic, where theirs (especially Austin's) was tentative, one tremendous notion has come in which alters the whole aspect of the belief. It is the notion of punishment as satisfaction for sin. "Guilt," said Aquinas, "cannot be set right except through punishment ; and as God leaves nothing in disorder, He never forgives guilt without punishment."¹ If satisfaction has not been given during life, by means of suffering, of good works, and self-denial voluntarily undergone, it must be given after death. Purgatory is the working out, under immeasurably more painful conditions, of the penance which would be laid upon a sinner in sacramental confession. It fulfils, therefore, a double purpose. Theoretically, indeed, the main purpose of purgatory is still as it was at the beginning of its history in the teaching of Gregory and Austin, to cleanse the soul of small faults by means of moral discipline ; practically, it has come to be a retribution, the exaction to the last farthing of a debt incurred by mortal sins. This is a wholly new feature in the case,

¹ See the words at the foot of p. 48.

—as unknown to Gregory as to Austin.¹ What Christ bore for us is not taken into account in mitigation of the temporal punishment of sin ; and as if He had never died for men, souls have to bear, or to get borne, here or hereafter, sufferings commensurate with their wrong-doing, of which the guilt indeed is forgiven, but the penalty not at all.

This was the feature upon which the popular imagination fastened ; and when the wording of the Article was changed, it was doubtless done, not in order to allow the doctrine of the Schoolmen, but in order to condemn along with the doctrine of the Schoolmen the popular teaching and opinion of the time.² I will give but one instance of the popular opinion, and it shall not be taken from the denunciations of its opponents, but from the writings of its most illustrious and enlightened defender. All the touching

¹ Austin, of course, knew well that pardon does not always carry with it the remission of a temporal penalty ; but he never teaches that the temporal penalty must in all cases be borne ; nor does any word of his connect such a penalty with his theory of purgatory.

² And doubtless, as Hardwick points out, the Tridentine teaching as well (*Articles*, p. 130).

and impassioned eloquence of Sir Thomas More is concentrated in the "Supplication of Souls," by which he replied to the famous "Supplication of Beggars." This is the appeal with which they close their Supplication—

"Whoso pitieth not us, whom can he pity?
If ye pity the poor, there is none so poor as we,
that have not a brat"—*i.e.* a scrap, or a rag—"to
put on our backs. If ye pity the blind, there is
none so blind as we, which are here in the dark,
saving for sights unpleasant and loathsome till
some comfort come. If ye pity the lame, there
is none so lame as we, that neither can creep
one foot out of the fire, nor have one hand at
liberty to defend our face from the flame.
Finally, if ye pity any man in pain, never knew
ye pain comparable to ours, whose fire as far
passeth in heat all the fires that ever burned
upon earth, as the hottest of all those passeth
a feigned fire painted on a wall. If ever ye lay
sick, and thought the night long, and longed
sore for day, while every hour seemed longer
than five; bethink you then what a long night
we silly souls endure, that lie sleepless, restless,

burning and broiling in the dark fire one long night of many days, of many weeks, and some of many years together. You walter peradventure and tolter in sickness from side to side, and find little rest in any part of the bed : we lie bounden to the brands, and cannot lift up our heads. You have your physicians with you, that sometime cure and heal you : no physick will help our pain, nor no plaster cool our heat. Your keepers do you great ease, and put you in good comfort : our keepers are such as God keep you from, cruel damned spirits ; odious, envious, and hateful, despiteous enemies, and despiteful tormentors ; and their company more grievous to us than is the pain itself, and the intolerable torments that they do us, wherewith from top to toe they cease not continually to tear us." ¹

If such was the view of Purgatory taken by the author of the *Utopia*, it is not to be wondered at that the doctrine, both in its popular acceptance and in its philosophical and reasoned form, should have been indignantly flung aside by our

¹ More's *English Works*, p. 337 (ed. 1557).

Reformers, when criticism once began. It was found to be "grounded upon no warranty of Scripture." It has no traditional connexion with the Apostles and their teaching. If its genealogy can be traced higher than to Augustine, it must be traced to the ethnic speculations which the great eclectic teacher of Alexandria joined to a Christian faith. It was not the doctrine of the Fathers. What the Schoolmen added to the patristic texts made a new doctrine of it altogether. The patristic purgatory was destined neither for good Christians nor for bad. The ordinary Christian was expected to escape it altogether, and to pass at once by death into a state of peace and happiness. Bad Christians went straight to the preliminary experiences of hell. No mortal sins were expiated in purgatory. Its flames were for venial sins alone. But the Schoolmen made purgatory into a place of which the main purpose was to provide temporal chastisement for greater sins of which the guilt had already been forgiven—that is to say, which were no longer liable to eternal punishment. One little-intended effect

was to make men think less of the guilt of sin. The guilt was easily got rid of. A Buonconte da Montefeltro had but to end a life of crime with the name of Mary, and "per una lagrimetta" he was out of the grasp of the devils who claimed him.¹ Salvation became cheap. But for those who were saved there remained to be endured all the torments which their sins involved as their consequence. While few men feared that they would go to hell for their sins, fewer still would hope that they had so lived as to go to heaven without purgatory. The better and humbler a man was, the more surely he supposed that he would suffer there. His life was occupied in endeavouring to forestall as much of that suffering as possible, by enduring it here instead of there. Death assumed a terror that it had never worn before, and Christians under the Gospel more truly than Jews or Gentiles in the time before Christ, "through fear of death," for others as well as for themselves, "were all their lifetime subject to bondage."²

¹ Dante, *Purgatorio*, v. 100 foll.

² Heb. ii. 15. Perhaps the doctrine of Purgatory, baseless

as it was, might have been less challenged, if it had not been for one special outcome of it. It was the granting of Indulgences, or Pardons, as they were popularly called. They are so called in our Article. Such Pardons, I need hardly say, were supposed to be wholly different from Absolutions. Absolution removes the guilt of sin; Indulgences are supposed to remit, in whole or in part, the temporal consequences—that is to say, to shorten the time of suffering in purgatory. It was the sale of these Indulgences which provoked the great outburst of the Reformation movement. See, for an excellent account of them, Creighton's *Papacy*, v. 58.

LECTURE II.

THE STATE OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

IN reviewing the history of the mediaeval belief in purgatory, I left out of sight one whole class of testimony, which, if treated after the fashion of most Roman controversialists, would put a different aspect upon the matter. From Bellarmine downwards, Roman controversialists have claimed every mention of prayers for the dead in any ancient author as a proof that such authors held their doctrine of purgatory. The point is not argued; it is simply assumed. Every record of prayers for the dead, every notice of offering the Christian sacrifice on behalf of them, is taken to indicate that those dead were

held to be in purgatory, and, of course, in such a purgatory as the Councils of Florence and of Trent decreed.

At that rate, it would indeed be easy to prove that the Roman doctrine of purgatory is a primitive and a catholic doctrine. Probably no well-informed person doubts that prayers for the dead, and in particular prayers at the Eucharistic Sacrifice, are as ancient as Christianity itself, and have as complete a sanction as the universal custom of the Church can give. If such prayers are not found—or not plainly found—in the Old Testament, it is because the doctrine of the life beyond death was itself not yet brought fully to light. The Second Book of Maccabees is, as St. Austin said, to be read with caution,¹ and we may not at once conclude that an opinion or a practice is laudable because it is mentioned with approval there. But that book is indisputable evidence that prayers and sacrifices for the dead were in use among the Jews before the Christian era, and that only those could be supposed to object to them who

¹ *Contra Gaudentium*, i. 38.

did not believe in the future resurrection.¹ Judas Maccabaeus had raised a collection to provide a great propitiatory sacrifice on behalf of his countrymen who fell in battle, with the evidence of their frailty concealed in their garments. The fact that he is praised for doing so may be held to show that such sacrifices for the dead were of recent introduction ; but so to a great degree was the belief which the historian discerned as underlying his action ; "doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection ; for if he had not hoped that they which were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead." The practice of prayer and almsgiving on behalf of the dead is part of the traditional Judaism.² If there is but one generally acknowledged prayer for a departed Christian in the New Testament,³ no disapproval of such prayers

¹ 2 Macc. xii. 46. The passage, as Mr. Burkitt has pointed out to me, has had in the Latin versions a very curious and instructive history. See Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate*, p. 23.

² See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 329.

³ 2 Tim. i. 18.

is either expressed or implied. The absence of them is perhaps to be explained by the expectation of Christ's imminent return, which drew away attention from the brief waiting of the faithful dead, partly also by the joyful certainty of a glorious issue which the Lord's resurrection had newly shed over the waiting state. At what is practically the opening of Christian literature, in the age of Tertullian, the evidence for prayers for the dead, as an immemorial though uncommanded custom of the Church, is ample and not contested.¹ Alone in Christian antiquity, the voice of Acrius in the fourth century made itself heard in opposition to them, affirming that they were useless in themselves, and harmful in their effects, because men were induced to live carelessly here, in the hope that such prayers would avail for them after death. For this contention amongst others he was classed as a heretic by Epiphanius² in the East and by Austin³ in the West.

¹ Tert. *De Corona*, 3: *Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis annua die facimus. . . . Harum et aliarum eiusmodi disciplinarum si legem expostules scripturarum, nullam inuenies: traditio tibi praelendetur auctrix, consuetudo confirmatrix, et fides observatrix.*

² *Haer.* 75.

³ *Haer.* 53.

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If, therefore, to pray for the dead is to show a belief in purgatory, all ancient Christendom believed in purgatory. But when we look into the contents of their prayers so far as they are accessible to us, we find that they imply no belief of the kind.

Take, for example, the evidence of certain ancient documents which have recently been brought to our knowledge.

The so-called "Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ," published a little more than a year ago by the Patriarch of Antioch belonging to the Roman obedience, is, I think, not so ancient a document as its first editor sought to make out, but I should be inclined to place it in the middle of the fourth century.¹ "Remember," the bishop is represented as saying when he celebrates the Eucharist, "those who have fallen asleep in faith, and grant us an inheritance with Thy saints; vouchsafe us power to please Thee, even

¹ The most elaborate discussion of the subject is that by Dr. F. X. Funk of Tübingen, *Das Testament unseres Herrn und die verwandten Schriften* (Mainz, 1901), in Ehrhard and Kirsch's *Forschungen zur Chr. Litt. und Dogmengeschichte*. Funk, with Harnack, Achelis, and others, places the work no earlier than the fifth century.

as they pleased Thee.”¹ “For the dead who have passed away from the Church,” cries the deacon in his “Proclamation” or bidding of prayer, “let us pray that the Lord may grant them a place of repose.”² The faithful are exhorted to leave property to the Church, in order (amongst other things) that “God may give repose to those who left it.”³ After a Christian has been dead for a year, his property is distributed to the poor, “for the benefit of his soul” or “to obtain prayers for his soul.”⁴ Such prayers are very colourless. They could, indeed, be used by persons holding the doctrine of purgatory, but they are far from implying it.

The Prayer-book of Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis in Egypt, to whom Athanasius addressed his letters on the Holy Spirit, has lately been brought to light. In it we read, after the consecration of the Eucharist, “We beseech Thee also for all them that are fallen asleep.” (Their names are then recited.) “Sanctify these souls,” it continues, “for Thou knowest them all.

¹ *Testamentum D. N. Iesu Christi* (ed. Rahman), p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

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Sanctify all those souls that are fallen asleep in the Lord, and number them with Thy holy Powers, and give them a place and a mansion in Thy kingdom.”¹

The little manual contains besides a special prayer for one who is carried out to burial—

“God who hast the power of life and death, God of spirits and Master of all flesh, God who killest and makest alive, who bringest down to the gates of Hades and bringest up, who dost create the spirit of man within him and takest to Thyself the souls of the saints and causest them to rest ; who alterest and changest and transfigurest Thy creatures, as is right and meet, being Thyself alone incorruptible and unchanging and eternal ; we beseech Thee for the sleep and rest of this Thy servant : give rest to his soul, his spirit, in green pastures, in secret chambers of rest with Abraham and Isaac and

¹ *Journal of Theol. Studies*, No. I. p. 106 : Παρακαλούμεν δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν κεκοιμημένων, ὧν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡ ἀνάμνησις . . . ἁγιάσον τὰς ψυχὰς ταύτας, σὺ γὰρ πάσας γινώσκεις. Ἀγιάσον πάσας τὰς ἐν κυρίῳ κοιμηθείσας καὶ συγκαταριθμήσον πάσαις ταῖς ἁγίαις σου δυνάμεσιν καὶ δὸς αὐτοῖς τόπον καὶ μονὴν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

Jacob and all Thy saints : and raise up his body in the day which Thou hast ordained, according to Thy promises which cannot lie, that Thou mayest also render to it the fitting inheritances in Thy holy pastures. Remember not his transgressions and sins ; and make his going forth to be peaceful and blessed.”¹

Here is no trace of a belief in any penal suffering undergone by any of those who are prayed for. “Rest,” “sleep,” “a place of repose,” “a place and a mansion in God’s kingdom,” “in green pastures,” “sanctification,” “to be numbered with all the Powers,” the resurrection of the body, that the sins of the

¹ *Ibid.*, No. II. p. 268 : ‘Ο θεός ὁ ζῶν καὶ θανάτου τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ δεσπότης πάσης σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς ὁ θανατῶν καὶ ζωογονῶν, ὁ κατὰ γὰρ εἰς πύλας ἔδου καὶ ἀνάγων, ὁ κτίζων πνεῦμα ἀνθρώπου ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ παραλαμβάνων τῶν ἁγίων τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ ἀναπαύων, ὁ ἄλλοιῶν καὶ μεταβάλλων καὶ μετασχηματίζων τὰ κτίσματά σου καθὼς δίκαιον καὶ σύμφερὸν ἔστιν, μόνος αὐτὸς ἑφθαρτος καὶ ἀπαλλοίωτος καὶ αἰώνιος ὢν· δέμεθά σου περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως καὶ ἀναπαύσεως τοῦ δούλου σου τοῦδε· τὴν ψυχὴν, τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀνάπαυσον ἐν τόποις χλοῆς, ἐν ταμείοις ἀναπαύσεως μετὰ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων σου· τὸ δὲ σῶμα ἀνάστησον ἐν ᾧ ᾤρισας ἡμέρα κατὰ τὰς ἀψευδεῖς σου ἐπαγγελίας, ἵνα καὶ τὰς κατ’ ἐξίαν αὐτῷ κληρονομίας ἀποδῇς ἐν ταῖς ἀγίαις σου νομαῖς. Τῶν παραπτωμάτων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἁμαρτημάτων μὴ μνησθῇς, τὴν δὲ ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ εἰρηνικὴν καὶ εὐλογημένην εἶναι ποιήσον.

departed may not be remembered,—these are the things prayed for. Nor does the fact that they are prayed for imply that at the moment of praying they are not enjoyed or assured. On the contrary, it implies that these are the things which it is hoped that the Christian dead are already assured of and enjoy.

These prayers are wholly in keeping with those ancient formulae which were before familiar to us. The prayers for the dead in the so-called Clementine Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions, for instance, are fuller, but not different in character. After the “proclamation” by the deacon, which includes the prayer that God will “receive the soul” of the person prayed for and “forgive him every sin,” and “set him in the land of the godly who are at liberty,” the bishop is bidden to pray—

“O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who art their God as living, not as dead (for the souls of all live unto Thee, and the spirits of the righteous are in Thy hand, and no torment shall touch them ; for all the saints are in Thy hand), look now upon this Thy servant, whom

Thou hast chosen and taken unto another lot, and pardon him whatever sin he hath committed willingly or unwillingly, and give him kind angels, and set him in the bosom of the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, and of all who have pleased Thee from the beginning of the world, where there is no grief or pain or sighing, but the place of the godly at liberty, and the land of the upright (laid up for Thee), and of them that behold therein the glory of Thy Christ.”¹

The Liturgy of St. James, of Syrian origin, besides the short supplication “for the repose of our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep before us,”² contains this beautiful prayer—

“Remember, O Lord, Thou God of spirits and of all flesh, the right believers whom we have remembered and whom we have not remembered, from righteous Abel unto this day ; make Thou them to rest yonder in the land of the living, in Thy kingdom, in the enjoyments of Paradise, in the bosoms of our holy fathers,

¹ *Const. Ap.* viii. 41.

² Brightman, *Eastern Liturgies*, p. 47.

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from whence pain, sorrow, and sighing are fled away, where the light of Thy countenance visiteth them, and shineth perpetually.”¹

Of a like purport is the prayer for the departed in the Egyptian Liturgy of St. Mark—

“And give rest also to the souls of all these, O Lord, the Lord our God, in the tabernacles of Thy saints, in Thy kingdom, bestowing upon them the good things of Thy promises, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, which Thou hast prepared, O God, for them that love Thy holy name. Give rest to their souls, and vouchsafe to them the kingdom of heaven.”²

¹ Brightman, p. 57 : Μνήσθητι, κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ὧν ἐμνήσθημεν καὶ ὧν οὐκ ἐμνήσθημεν ὁρθοδόξων ἀπὸ Ἀβελ τοῦ δικαίου μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας· αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀνάπαυσον ἐν χώρῃ ζώντων, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ τοῦ παραδείσου, ἐν τοῖς κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἡμῶν, ὅθεν ἀπέδρα ὁδύνη, λύπη, καὶ στεναγμός, ἐνθα ἐπισκοπεῖ τὸ φῶς τοῦ προσώπου σου καὶ καταλάμπει διὰ παντός.

² *Ibid.*, p. 129 : Καὶ τούτων πάντων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαυσον, δέσποτα κύριε ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων σου σκηναῖς, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, χαρίζομενος αὐτοῖς τὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν σου ἀγαθὰ ἃ ὀφθαλμοὶ οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὖς οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπων

"Remember," says the Byzantine Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, with which at this point that of St. Basil coincides, "all who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection of eternal life, and give them rest where the light of Thy countenance visiteth."¹

At the risk of being tedious I have put these passages together, in order that it may be clearly felt what is the main tenor and tone of the prayers of the departed in the early Christianity of the East. Nor is it probable that in the West the public prayers of the Church in primitive days were very different. "Give them, O Lord, eternal rest, and let perpetual light shine upon them;" "May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace"—prayers of immemorial antiquity—may be taken as samples. But perhaps, broadly speaking, the sense of personal sin has always been more

οὐκ ἀνέβη, & ἡτοίμασας, ὁ θεός, τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸ ὄνομά σου τὸ ἄγιον. Αὐτῶν μὲν τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαυσον καὶ βασιλείας οὐρανῶν καταξίωσον· ἡμῶν δέ, κ.τ.λ.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 332: Μνήσθητι πάντων τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἐν ἐλπίδι· ἀναστάσεως ζωῆς αἰωνίου, καὶ ἀνάπαυσον αὐτοὺς ὅπου ἐπισκοπεῖ τὸ φῶς τοῦ προσώπου σου.

deeply felt in the West than in the East. The Eastern is painfully conscious of his limitations, the Western of his shortcomings. The difference is seen in the greater frequency and insistence with which, even in the Gelasian formularies, when the dead are prayed for, there is mention of sin, and forgiveness, and cleansing, of "escaping the place of punishment, and the fire of hell, and the flame of tartarus," of "passing by the gates of hell and the ways of darkness," and the like. Already the dangerously ambiguous prayer "Propitiare" begins to be uttered, which lends itself so readily to a gloomy conception of the conditions of the dead.¹ As time went on, the tone of the Western prayers for

¹ These prayers (many of them as beautiful as the Greek) will be found in Wilson's *Gelasian Sacramentary*, p. 295, foll. See esp. p. 296, 1st collect: *Uti locum poenalem, et gehennae ignem, flammamque tartari in regione uiuentium euadat*; p. 297, 4th collect: *Liceat ei transire portas infernorum et uias tenebrarum . . . donec ei delicta atque peccata usque ad nouissimum quadrantem*; p. 298, 3rd collect: *Libera eam, Domine, de principibus tenebrarum et de locis poenarum*; p. 299, 2nd collect: *Animas huius subueniat sublimis dominus, ut ardore careat aeterni ignis, adeptura perpetui regni refugium* (this collect belongs, however, to a later date than the *Gelasian Sacramentary*); p. 304, collects 5 and 6; p. 305, collect 2; p. 307, collects 1 and 2; p. 309, collect 2.

the dead became sadder and sterner. It seems hard to criticize anything so impressive and so beautiful as the Commendation of Souls and the Order for the Burial of the Dead which were in use in England in the Middle Ages. It may at once be conceded that the popular belief concerning purgatory does not display itself in them to the degree that might have been expected. Partly the forms may have become fixed before the doctrine did—as was the case with the Holy Eucharist;—partly, the Church still shrank from definitely assuming that any given soul had gone into purgatory, and not into Paradise. As in our present Burial Service, the tone was optimistic rather than the reverse, considering the terror of purgatory that formed the spiritual background. Yet even so there is a darker shade in the prayers than is discernible in those of the Greek-speaking Churches. The opening words of the Sarum Office for the Burial of the Dead strike the note. While our modern service begins with “I am the Resurrection and the Life,” the pre-Reformation service began with the thrice-repeated

anthem, "The sorrows of death compassed me round about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me."¹

It is, I suppose, well known that in the original draft of the Article with which I am mainly dealing in these lectures—the XXIIInd—it had been proposed to associate prayers for the dead with Purgatory, and Pardons, and Invocation of Saints—or at least the doctrine of the School authors concerning them—as a fond thing vainly invented, repugnant to the Word of God. The moderation and fair-mindedness of our Reformers was well shown by their determination, after discussion, to strike out those words.² Doubtless most of them were personally opposed to praying for the dead; but they would not force their opinions upon the Church. Although the new Prayer-book contained no explicit and undoubted supplications for the dead, its compilers—for they were

¹ The *Commendatio Animarum* will be found in Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia Eccl. Angl.* vol. i. p. 130; the *Inhumatio Defuncti*, p. 142 (ed. 1882).

² See Hardwick, *Articles of Religion*, p. 103 (ed. 1859). Cp. Green, *XXXIX. Articles and the Age of the Reformation*, p. 151.

practically the same men who framed the Articles—deliberately refused to condemn in such terms prayers for the dead, or even the scholastic doctrine concerning them. They left the matter open. Assuredly if they did so, it was because they saw that prayers for the dead, as used in the Primitive Church, in no sense involved the belief in a purgatory like that of Aquinas or of More.

It is not to be denied that Eastern and ancient teachers and their Churches prayed for the forgiveness of the sins of the dead. It was but natural that they should do so. The usage of Judas Maccabaeus and the Jews was taken over into the Christian Church without question, and the Christian sacrifice was employed to impetrate for the dead remission of sins, as well as all other benefits of Christ's Passion. Some of the Greek prayers which I have quoted contain the request. It is somewhat more emphasized in the Liturgies of one or two of the Churches of the farther East. If the Testament of Ephraem the Syrian is genuine,¹ that Father argued

¹ Quoted by Hurter, *Comp. Theol. Dogm.* iii. p. 580.

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directly, and *a fortiori*, from the words of Maccabees that the Eucharist is a powerful propitiation for the dead. I have already spoken of the views of Chrysostom upon the subject.¹ But it is only in the West that the propitiatory aspect became prominent, and not in the West till the time of St. Austin. The prayers of Tertullian's age, besides the general petitions for refreshment and repose, were (like our own) for the hastening of Christ's kingdom, and for a share in the first resurrection, perhaps misunderstood.² Austin, on the other hand, though sometimes he too confines himself to generalities,³ habitually thinks of masses and good works in their relation to sin and its punishment. Every one knows the famous passage where he divides Christian men's lives into three classes. There are some so good that they do not require assistance after death, and some so bad that no assistance avails them, and

¹ See above, p. 21.

² Tert. *De Monog.* 10, 11.

³ E.g. Serm. clxxii. 2: *Orationibus vero sanctae ecclesiae, et sacrificio saluari, et elemosynis, quae pro eorum spiritibus erogantur, non est dubitandum mortuos adiuuari, ut cum eis misericordius agatur a domino, quam eorum peccata meruerunt.*

some that are neither the one nor the other. Austin's object is always to inculcate practical religion, and he wishes to make it clear that there is no hope to be derived from the devotions of others after death, unless a man has (as he puts it) "deserved" to be helped by them. "When, therefore," he says, "sacrifices, whether of the altar or of any kind of alms, are offered collectively for all the baptized who are dead, for the very good, they are thanksgivings; for the not very bad, they are propitiations; for the very bad, though they are of no advantage to the deceased, they are some comfort to the living. In the cases where they are of no avail, they avail either to obtain full remission, or, if not that, to make the condemnation itself more tolerable." It is disputed whether in the last clause Austin is speaking of the damned, or of those who will ultimately be saved. The words themselves seem to suggest the former interpretation, but the context decides for the latter—for Austin has just affirmed that no sacrifices avail for the damned. Those whose condemnation is made more tolerable are the souls in that

purgatory of which I said in my first lecture that Austin was the discoverer.¹

¹ *Enchir. cx. : His haec prosunt, qui cum uiuerent ut haec sibi postea possint prodesse meruerunt. . . . Cum ergo sacrificia, siue altaris, siue quarumcumque elemosynarum, pro baptizatis defunctis omnibus offerantur, pro ualde bonis gratiarum actiones sunt ; pro non ualde malis propitiations sunt ; pro ualde malis etiam si nulla sunt adiumenta mortuorum, qualescumque uiuorum consolationes sunt. Quibus autem prosunt, aut ad hoc prosunt ut sit plena remissio, aut certe ut tolerabilior fiat ipsa damnatio.* The sentiment that the chief, that practically the only, object of prayers, alms, and masses for the dead was to obtain remission of sins, became more and more prevalent in the West. It reacted powerfully upon the conception of prayers, alms, and masses themselves. They became "good works," a kind of legal tender to be set off against so much punishment due to the departed, until the last farthing should be accounted for. Our Lord had said, using figurative language, that the unforgiving man was in danger of being cast into prison, and that, once there, he would stay there till he had extinguished the debt. The sinner himself was to pay it. But this was held to be an impossibility. The dead, cut off from any sort of action, can merit nothing farther, for good or for evil. Nothing that lies in their power avails to soften their punishment. The living alone are in a position to purchase a vicarious relief for them. By pilgrimages, by fastings, by other costly efforts undertaken on behalf of the dead, their dreadful sufferings could be reduced, and by these alone. Such exercises lost the first disciplinary value that they may have had for those who performed them, in this new aspect of meritorious actions on behalf of others. In particular, the conception of sacrifice in connexion with the mass became unspeakably degraded, by being viewed only as a means of obtaining the pardon of sin and punishment, whether for the dead or for the living, until

To speak generally, the prayers of the primitive Church for the faithful departed were such as presupposed, on the one hand, that they were in a state of happiness and security, but, on the other, not in that full and perfect state of bliss which we are taught ultimately to look forward to. They were neither thought of as suffering in a mediaeval purgatory, nor yet as possessed of what we commonly speak of as heaven. There was no fixed and technical name to describe their state, although the scriptural title of "Abraham's bosom" was frequently given to it; but it was fairly understood to be an intermediate condition between the state of salvation upon earth and the consummation which comes at the resurrection—a life "with Christ," which is "far better" than the present, and yet falling far short of that which is to be hereafter.

the form which it assumed in popular belief was such as even to justify that severe language of the XXXIst Article, that "the sacrifices of masses, in the which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

It is curious to read what is said by some modern Romanists, who maintain that souls which are not in purgatory are in heaven, with regard to the teaching of the earliest Christian Fathers on the subject. They are not, it seems, to be considered as witnesses to the true belief, except so far as that they mention it to combat it. "That our belief was received in their days," says the Benedictine editor of Hilary, "is proved by the ado which Irenaeus and Tertullian make to tear it out of the minds of the faithful. Those who read the genuine acts of the martyrs will scarcely find one but Justin, who did not suffer in the hope that he would pass by death to heaven."¹ Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Justin—it must be confessed—make up a formidable phalanx for the champions of an unchanging tradition to encounter; nor do they stand alone in their testimony.

"If you are scourged and beheaded," asked the Prefect Rusticus, "do you think that you will go up to heaven?" Justin replied, "I hope

¹ *Praefat.* p. lxviii.

that I shall (one day) have His gifts, if I endure these things; for I know that for all who have lived in this manner the divine bounty is waiting until the completion of the whole world.”¹

Justin affirms “that the souls of the good abide in some better region, and those of the unrighteous and wicked in a worse, awaiting alike the time of judgment.”² “If,” says Justin, arguing with the Jew Trypho, “you have met with so-called Christians who . . . blaspheme the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls are taken up to heaven at the moment of death, do not consider them to be Christians.”³

¹ *Mart. Iustini et Soc.* 5 (Otto, t. ii. p. 276): “Ἐλπίζω ἔχειν αὐτοῦ τὰ δόματα, ἐὰν ὑπομείνω ταῦτα· οἶδα γὰρ πᾶσι τοῖς οὕτω βιάσασι παραμένειν τὸ θεῖον χάρισμα μέχρι τῆς ἐκπληρώσεως τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου. Cp. *Acts of Apollonius* (Conybeare, *Monuments of Early Christianity*), p. 46: “to look forward to judgment after death, to expect rewards after the resurrection to be given by God to those who have lived in piety.”

² *Dial.* 5 (223 B; Otto, p. 24): Τὰς μὲν τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐν κρείττονι ποι χάρις μένειν, τὰς δὲ ἀδίκους καὶ πονηρὰς ἐν χειρόνι, τὸν τῆς κρίσεως ἐκδεχομένης χρόνον τότε.

³ *Ibid.* 80 (306 D; Otto, p. 290): Εἰ γὰρ καὶ συνεβάλετε ὑμεῖς τισὶ λεγομένοις χριστιανοῖς, καὶ τοῦτο μὴ ὁμολογοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ

"Some of those who have been reputed orthodox," says Irenaeus, "break through the order in which the righteous are advanced, and are ignorant of the successive steps in the preparation for immortality, and share the views of the heretics, (who) despising the handiwork of God, and not acknowledging the salvation of their flesh, . . . say that as soon as they are dead they pass beyond the heavens. . . . If this were as they affirm, the Lord Himself, in whom they profess to believe, would not have accomplished His resurrection on the third day, but as soon as He expired upon the Cross, would, no doubt, have ascended immediately, leaving His body to the earth. But as it was, He occupied Himself for the three days where the dead are. . . . To Mary, who first saw and worshipped Him, He said, 'Touch Me not ; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.' . . . [Even so] the souls of His disciples . . . depart into a place unseen, appointed

βλασφημεῖν τοιμῶσι τὸν θεὸν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰσαὰκ καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰακώβ, οἱ καὶ λέγουσι μὴ εἶναι νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις, ἀλλὰ ἅμα τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, μὴ ἐπολάβητε αὐτοὺς χριστιανοὺς.

for them by God ; and there they dwell until the resurrection, waiting for the resurrection ; then, receiving again their bodies, and rising complete, that is, with their bodies, even as the Lord rose, thus and not otherwise they will come to the vision of God."¹

The same view is clearly held by Tertullian.

¹ *Haer.* v. 31 : *Quoniam autem quidam ex his qui putantur recte credidisse, supergradiuntur ordinem promotionis iustorum, et motus meditationis ad incorruptelam* [*? μελέτης πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν*] *ignorant, haereticos sensus in se habentes, . . . et non suscipientes salutem carnis suae, contemnentes autem et repromissionem dei, et totum supergredientes deum sensu, simul atque mortui fuerint, dicunt se supergredi cae'os . . . nolentes intellegere quoniam, si haec ita essent, quemadmodum dicunt, ipse utique dominus, in quem se dicunt credere, non in tertia die fecisset resurrectionem, sed super crucem expirans confestini utique abiisset sursum, relinquens corpus terrae. Nunc autem tribus diebus conuersatus est ubi erant mortui . . . resurgens autem tertia die, et Mariae, quae se prima uidit et adorauit, dicebat ; "Noli me tangere ; nondum enim ascendi ad patrem." . . . Si ergo dominus legem mortuorum seruauit, ut primogenitus a mortuis, et commoratus usque in tertiam diem in inferioribus terrae, . . . ubi animae mortuorum erant, post deinde corporaliter resurrexit, et post resurrectionem assumptus est, manifestum est quia et discipulorum eius, propter quos et hoc operatus est dominus, ad ψυχὰς ἀπέρχονται εἰς [ἀδρα]στον τόπον τῶν ὀρισμένων αὐταῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, κακεῖ μέχρι τῆς ἀναστάσεως φοιτᾶσι, περιμένουσαι τὴν ἀνάστασιν· ἔπειτα ἀπολαβοῦσαι τὰ σώματα, καὶ ὁλοκλήρως ἀναστᾶσαι, τοῦτέστι σωματικῶς, καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἀνέστη, οὕτως ἐλεύσονται εἰς τὴν ὕψιν τοῦ θεοῦ. Nemo enim est discipulus super magistrum ; perfectus autem omnis erit sicut magister eius.*

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His work on Paradise is lost, but he tells us that in it he had proved that all souls are placed in safe keeping below until the day of the Lord.¹ Christ Himself had descended into the heart of the earth, and the servants must not expect to be above their Lord, or think scorn to solace themselves in Abraham's bosom while waiting for their resurrection. "How," Tertullian asks, "shall the soul rise like a vapour into heaven, while Christ is still seated there at the right hand of the Father" (instead of "descending from heaven with a shout"), before the trumpet has sounded the command of God? . . . Heaven is opened to none, while earth remains, with its bars fastened. When the world shall pass away, the kingdoms of heaven shall be unlocked."² The martyrs,

¹ *De Anima*, 55 : *Habes etiam de paradiso a nobis libellum, quo constituimus omnem animam apud inferos sequestrari in diem domini.*

² *Ibid.* 55 : *Quodsi Christus deus, quia et homo mortuus secundum scripturas et sepultus secundum easdem, huic quoque legi satisfecit forma humanae mortis apud inferos functus, nec ante ascendit in sublimiora caelorum quam descendit in inferiora terrarum, ut illic patriarchas et prophetas compotes sui faceret, habes et regionem inferum subterraneam credere, et illos cubito*

according to Tertullian, have the special and unique privilege of entering at death into Paradise; but their Paradise he identifies with the place beneath the altar where St. John saw them in the Apocalypse.¹ Not even they have entered into heaven. "Are all souls, then, in hell?" asks the opponent of Tertullian's view. He replies, "Whether you approve of it or not, there are both torments and comforts there; both the beggar and the rich man are found there. . . . Why should you not suppose that souls in the world below receive an intermediate chastisement and an intermediate refreshment while waiting for their respective dooms, in the preliminary sufferings of the one and the

pellere qui satis superbe non putent animas fidelium inferis dignas, serui super dominum et discipuli super magistrum, aspernati (si forte) in Abraham sinu expectandae resurrectionis solacium capere. . . . Quomodo ergo anima exhalabit in caelum, Christo illic adhuc sedente ad dexteram patris, nondum dei iussu per tubam archangeli audito, nondum illis, quos domini aduentus in saeculo inuenerit, obuiam ei ereptis in aerem, cum his qui mortui in Christo primi resurgent? Nulli patet caelum terra adhuc salua, ne dixerim clausa. Cum transactione enim mundi reserabuntur regna caelorum.

¹ *Ibid.* Cp. de Res. Carn. 43: *Nemo enim peregrinatus a corpore statim immoratur penes dominum, nisi ex martyrii praerogatiua, paradiso scilicet, non inferis, diuersurus.*

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white robe that marks them for the other?"¹ Hell, or the world below, is divided into two regions. There is what may be properly called hell; and there is what is called Abraham's bosom, destined to receive the souls of Abraham's spiritual descendants. They are far apart, and Abraham's bosom is higher than hell, for the rich man had to lift up his eyes to see it. "That region," Tertullian says, "I call Abraham's bosom. It is not heaven, though it is higher than hell; and it provides an intermediate refreshment for the souls of the righteous, until the consummation of all things, when the general resurrection shall be completed in the fulness of reward."²

¹ *De Anima*, 58: *Omnes ergo animae penes inferos, inquis? Velis ac nolis, et supplicia iam illic et refrigeria; habes pauperem et diuitem. . . . Cur enim non putes animam et puniri et foueri in inferis interim sub expectatione utriusque iudicii in quadam usurpatione et candida eius?*

² *Adv. Marc.* iv. 34: *Aliud enim inferi, ut puto; aliud quoque Abrahae sinus. Nam et magnum aiti intercedere regiones istas profundum et transitum utrinque prohibere. Sed nec alleuasset diues oculos, et quidem de longinquo, nisi in superiora et de altitudinis longinquo per immensam illam distantiam sublimitatis et profunditatis. . . . Eam itaque regionem sinum dico Abrahae, etsi non caelestem, sublimiorem tamen inferis, interim refrigerium praebituram animabus iustorum, donec consummatio rerum resurrectionem omnium plenitudine mercedis expungat.*

A still more explicit statement of belief is given by Hippolytus, the disciple of Irenaeus, in an important fragment of his work addressed to non-Christian readers. After treating of the place of the devils, he proceeds: "I must now speak of Hades, in which are confined the souls both of the righteous and of the unrighteous. Hades is a region in creation without form and void, a place below the earth, in which the light of the world does not shine. . . . This place is assigned as a place of safe keeping for souls, and over it are appointed angel warders, who in accordance with the deeds of each assign to them the temporary punishments of the various localities. In this region is set apart a place, a lake of fire unquenchable, into which we do not suppose that any one has yet been cast, but it is prepared for the day predestined by God," when in one great judgment the unrighteous will be condemned to eternal punishment, and the righteous will obtain the incorruptible, unfailing kingdom. "Although these last," Hippolytus continues, "are for the present confined in Hades, they are not confined

in the same locality as the unrighteous." A single way leads down into Hades; and at the gate stands an archangel with his host; and as the souls enter, "the righteous are led to the right, with lights and songs, by the angels set over the various regions, and brought into a place of light, where dwell all the righteous who have lived since the beginning, under no compulsion or restraint, but enjoying continually the contemplation of the good things which they behold, and delighting in looking for the new things that are constantly brought before their eyes, which always seem to be better and better. There is no weariness for them there, no scorching heat, no cold; no thistle grows there; but they have the sight of the ever-smiling countenance of the fathers and the righteous men, who await, what will be given them after they have done with this place, the rest and eternal restoration to life in heaven. This place we call the bosom of Abraham."¹

¹ Lagarde's *Hippolytus*, p. 68 foll. (cp. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, ii. p. 269): Περί δὲ ἔδου, ἐν ᾧ συνέχονται ψυχὰι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων, ἀναγκαῖον εἰπεῖν. Ὁ ἔδης τόπος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ κτίσει ἀκατασκεύαστος, χωρὶον ὑπόγειον ἐν ᾧ φῶς κόσμου οὐκ ἐπιλαμβάνει.

The testimony of these Fathers on such matters is sometimes disparaged on account of their more or less pronounced adoption of Chiliasm. As a matter of fact, their Chiliasm makes little or no difference to their conception of the present condition of departed

... Τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ὡς φρούριον ἀπενεμήθη ψυχαῖς, ἐφ' ᾧ κατεστάθησαν ἄγγελοι φρουροί, πρὸς τὰς ἐκάστων πράξεις διανέμοντες τὰς τῶν τόπων (v.l. τρόπων) προσκαίρους κολάσεις. Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῷ χωρίῳ τόπος ἀφάρισται τις, λίμνη πυρὸς ἀσβέστου, ἐν ᾧ μὲν οὐδέπω τινὰ καταρερίφθαι ὑπεilhάμεν, ἐσκευάσθαι δὲ εἰς τὴν προσωρισμένην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ θεοῦ. . . . Οἱ [sc. οἱ δίκαιοι] ἐν τῷ ᾧ θηρὺν μὲν συνέχονται, ἀλλ' οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ ᾧ καὶ οἱ ἁδικοὶ . . . ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν δίκαιοι εἰς δεξιὰ φάταγωγούμενοι καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐφεστῶτων κατὰ τόπον ἀγγέλων ὁμνούμενοι ἔγονται εἰς χωρίον φωτεινόν, ἐν ᾧ οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς δίκαιοι πολιτεύονται, οὐχ ὑπ' ἀνάγκης κρατούμενοι, ἀλλὰ τῆς τῶν ὁρμμένων ἀγαθῶν θέας ἀεὶ ἀπολαύοντες καὶ τῇ τῶν ἐκάστοτε καινῶν ὁρμμένων προσδοκίᾳ ἡδόμενοι κἀκεῖνα τούτων βελτίως ἡγούμενοι. Οἱς δὲ τόπος οὐ καματηφόρος γίνεται, οὐ καύσων, οὐ κρύος, οὐ τρίβολος ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν πατέρων δικαίων τε ὁρμμένη ὕψις πάντοτε μειδιᾷ, ἀναμεινόντων τὴν μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ αἰώνιαν ἀναβίωσιν ἐν οὐρανῷ. Τούτῳ δὲ ὄνομα κικλήσκομεν κόλπῳ Ἀβραάμ. With regard to the expression προσκαίρους κολάσεις, it might be supposed from the turn of the sentence that these temporary chastisements are assigned to the righteous as well as the wicked. But there is nothing in the context to corroborate such an interpretation. Hippolytus must needs have enlarged upon the thought, if he had intended to express it; and the absence of any suggestion of purgatorial sufferings in a passage where it would have been so natural to introduce it shows how far the conception was from the mind of Hippolytus. See Aitzberger, *Eschatologie der vorchristlichen Zeit*, p. 276.

souls. To suppose that there will hereafter be two resurrections, separated by an interval of a thousand years, does not necessarily affect the doctrine of the intermediate state. Nor do we find any appreciable difference of conception in other Fathers of the period who entirely rejected the opinions of Chiliasm. Of these the chief was Origen. It is hard to form a connected and systematic idea of Origen's belief with regard to the state of the departed faithful. To his mystical eyes, as there are hells beneath this world, so this world may be a hell in comparison with worlds above it, and they in turn to others above them. But when he has occasion to speak definitely of the intermediate state, it is on this wise—

“I believe that all the saints, on their departure from this life, will abide in some place in the earth, called Paradise by Holy Scripture, which serves as a place of education—the school and class-room of souls, where they are taught the meaning of all that they saw upon earth, and receive some intimations with regard to the coming future,—just as in this life they received

some intimations of what was then future, though in a mirror and by riddles, which are now revealed to the saints more openly and clearly in the proper places and at the right times."¹

Origen was not disposed, like Tertullian, to make any exception even in favour of the greatest of the saints.

"Not even the Apostles," he writes, "have yet received their joy. Even they are waiting, that I also may be made a partaker of their joy. The saints on their departure from hence do not immediately attain the complete rewards that they have deserved ; they wait for us also, slow and laggard as we are. They cannot have perfect joy, as long as they grieve over our errors and bewail our sins."²

¹ *De Princ.* II. xi. 6 : *Puto enim quod sancti quique discedentes de hac uita permanebunt in loco aliquo in terra posito, quem paradisi dicit scriptura diuina, uelut in quodam eruditionis loco, et, ut ita dixerim, auditorio uel schola animarum, in quo de omnibus his quae in terris uiderant doceantur, indicia quoque quaedam accipiant etiam de consequentibus et futuris, sicut in hac quoque uita positi indicia quaedam futurorum, licet per speculum et aenigmata, tamen ex aliqua parte conceperant, quae manifestius et lucidius sanctis in suis et locis et temporibus reuelantur.*

² In *Leuit.* hom. vii. 2 : *Nondum receperunt lactitiam suam ne apostoli quidem, sed et ipsi expectant, ut et ego lactitiae eorum*

Such was the doctrine of the great representative teachers of the first two hundred years after the Ascension; nor did it fail to find echoes in later generations. "Let no one suppose," says Lactantius, "that souls are judged directly after death. All are detained in one common custody, until the time comes for the supreme Judge to make His examination of their deservings. Then those whose righteousness is approved will receive the reward of immortality."¹ "Not to this world of time does that 'keeping' belong," says Hilary, "so that neither sun nor moon may burn, and they are preserved from all evil. It is the blessing to be looked for in the future, when on their 'going out' from the body all the faithful under the keeping of the Lord are preserved to the

particeps fiam. Neque enim decedentes hinc sancti continuo integra meritorum suorum praeemia consequuntur, sed expectant etiam nos, licet morantes, licet desides. Non enim est illis perfecta laetitia, donec pro erroribus nostris dolent et lugent nostra peccata.

¹ *Inst. Div. vii. 21: Nec quisquam putet animas post mortem protinus iudicari. Nam omnes in una communique custodia detinentur, donec tempus adveniat, quo maximus iudex meritorum faciat examen. Tunc quorum fuerit probata iustitia, ii praeium immortalitatis accipient.*

'coming in' unto the heavenly kingdom, being placed meanwhile in the bosom of Abraham, into which the godly cannot enter because of the gulf that is fixed between, until the time arrives for 'coming in' again into the kingdom of heaven. The Lord therefore shall preserve their 'going out,' when going out from the body they shall rest, separated from the ungodly by the gulf between. He shall preserve their 'coming in,' when He brings them into that eternal kingdom of bliss."¹ "Until the fulness of the time comes," says Ambrose, "souls are waiting for their due recompense. For some, punishment is in store ; for others, glory ; and yet meanwhile neither are the one left without hurt, nor the others without reward. . . . They begin to have an understanding of their repose, and

¹ In Ps. cxx. 16 : *Non enim temporis huius et saeculi est illa custodia, non aduri sole atque luna, et ab omni malo conservari ; sed futuri boni expectatio est, cum exeuntes de corpore ad introitum illum regni caelestes per custodiam domini fideles omnes reservabuntur, in sinu scilicet Abrahae collocati, quo adire impios interiectum chaos inhihet, quousque introeundi rursum in regnum caelorum tempus adueniat. Custodiet ergo dominus exitum, dum de corpore exeuntes secreti ab impiis interiecto chaos quiescant. Custodiet introitum dominus, in aeternum illud et beatum regnum introducens.*

to foresee their future glory. . . . They rejoice without fear, hasting to see the face of Him whom they so diligently served."¹ "Though the soul abides," cries Chrysostom, "though it be ten thousand times immortal—as indeed it is—yet apart from the flesh it will not receive those good things that are kept secret, nor be punished either. . . . If the body does not rise, the soul remains uncrowned, without share in that blessedness which is in heaven."² Austin, though he finds no scriptural authority for calling the state

¹ *De Bono Mortis*, x. 47 : *Ergo dum expectatur plenitudo temporis, expectant animae remunerationem debitam. Alias manet poena, alias gloria; et tamen nec illae interim sine iniuria, nec istae sine fructu sunt.* . . . xi. 48 : *Incipiunt intellegere requiem suam et futuram sui gloriam praevidere . . . ut sine trepidatione laetentur, festinantes nullum eius uidere, cui sedulae servitutis obsequia detulerunt.* Ambrose has said just before, x. 45, that souls on being freed from the body go to "Αἰθης, "that is, the unseen place, which in Latin we call *infernum*."

² In *Ep. I. ad Cor.* hom. xxxix. p. 499 (Field) : Κἄν μὲν ἡ ψυχὴ, κἄν μυριάκις ἀθάνατος ᾖ, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἔστι, τῆς σαρκὸς χωρὶς οὐκ ἀπολήφεται τὰ ἀπόρρητα ἀγαθὰ ἐκεῖνα, ὥσπερ οὖν οὐδὲ κολασθήσεται . . . εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἀνίσταται τὸ σῶμα, ἀστεφάνωτος ἡ ψυχὴ μένει ἔξω τῆς μακαριότητος ἐκείνης τῆς ἐν οὐρανοῖς. Cyril of Alexandria, *Adv. Anthropom.* 16, denies that rewards and punishments are given before the Judgment Day, and says that the Parable of Dives and Lazarus is not intended to teach us about the present condition of souls departed.

of the disembodied by the name of "hell," as others did, is by no means inclined to put that state of repose and blessedness on the same level with that which is to be hereafter. Souls in that "third heaven," or "Paradise," or whichever of many names may be employed, are admitted to see "the very substance of God;" and yet, in spite of that supreme blessedness, they need the resurrection of the body to complete their joy. Why they should need it is a question which Austin finds hard to answer; and yet, he says, "it cannot be doubted that the human mind, whether in the state of ecstasy, or in its disembodiment after death, is unable to see the unchangeable substance in the same way that holy angels see it;" the very fact of being without that integral part of human nature, which is put under the soul to be governed, itself prevents the soul from entering with all its powers collected into the highest heaven.¹ It

¹ *De Gen. ad Litt.* xii. 63 foll. ; see esp. 68 : *Si quem mouet, quid opus spiritibus defunctorum corpora sua in resurrectione recipere, si potest iis etiam sine corporibus summa illa beatitudo præberi, difficilior quidem quaestio est quam ut perfecte possit hoc sermone finire. Sed tamen minime dubitandum est, et raplam*

will be observed that the reason assigned is one which applies to the martyrs as much as to other saints. This is explicitly taught by Austin in one of his sermons on the martyrs Perpetua and Felicity. "This life which the blessed martyrs now enjoy," he says, "although it bears no comparison with any joys or pleasures of our present world, is after all but a little portion of the promise—nay, it is but a solace for its being deferred. But the day of recompense will come, when their bodies will be restored to them and the whole man will receive what he deserves. . . . As there is a wide difference between the joys and miseries of sleep and of waking, so there is a wide difference between the torments and the comforts of death and of the resurrection. . . . The repose of souls disembodied is not the same as the glory and felicity of angels, with whom in the resurrection the multitude of the faithful

hominis a carnis sensibus mentem, et post mortem ipsa carne deposita . . . non sic uidere posse incommutabilem substantiam ut sancti angeli uident, siue alia latentiore causa, siue ideo quia inest ei naturalis quidam appetitus corpus administrandi; quo appetitu retardatur quodammodo ne tota intentione pergat in illud summum caelum, quamdiu non subest corpus, cuius administratione appetitus ille conquiescit.

will be made equal, in their heavenly bodies.”¹ In the final review of his writings, Austin took occasion to comment on the contrast which he had drawn between the happiness of those yet seeking and the happiness of those in fruition. “But it is a great question,” he writes, “who those blessed ones are, who are already in possession of that to which this ‘way’ of ours leads. That the holy angels are there is unquestionable; but it may well be questioned whether departed saints are already in possession. They are freed, it is true, from the corruptible body which weigheth down the soul; but even they are still expecting the redemption of their bodies, and their flesh rests in hope, and is not yet glorified with the incorruption that

¹ *Serm. cclxxx. 5: Et hæc quidem uita, quam nunc beati martyres habent, quamuis iam nullis possit sæculi huius felicitatibus uel suauitatibus comparari, parua particula promissionis agitur, immo solacium dilationis. Veniet autem retributionis dies, ubi corporibus relictis totus homo recipiat quod meretur . . . sicut enim plurimum distat inter læticias miserasue somniantium et uigilantium, ita multum interest inter tormenta uel gaudia mortuorum et resurgentium . . . quod alia est animarum sine ullis corporibus requies, alia cum corporibus caelestibus claritas et felicitas angelorum, quibus æquabitur resurgentium multitudo fidelium.*

will be hereafter. But this is not the place to inquire whether they for that reason do not come short of the contemplation of the truth with the eyes of the heart which is spoken of as 'face to face.'"¹ Even so late a doctor as St. Bernard could repeat and insist upon similar teaching.²

It is no wonder that, in view of such testimonies, Jesuit theologians are forced to say that "some of the Fathers were in error upon this point, while others speak in such a manner that even if they disown the error they seem nevertheless by their inconsistency to favour it."³ But gradually the view combated by Justin as not a Christian view prevailed. The growth of Platonism in the Church, with its exaggerated sense of the

¹ *Retract.* I. xiv. 2 : *Sed quoniam sint illi beatissimi, qui iam sunt in ea possessione quo ducit haec uia, magna quaestio est. Et angeli quidem sancti quod ibi sint, nulla quaestio est; sed de sanctis hominibus iam defunctis, utrum ipsi saltem dicendi sint iam in illa possessione consistere, merito quaeritur. Iam enim corpore quidem corruptibili quo anima aggravatur exuti sunt, sed adhuc expectant etiam ipsi redemptionem corporis sui, et caro eorum requiescit in spe, nondum in futura incorruptione clarescit. Sed utrum ad contemplandam cordis oculis ueritatem, sicut dictum est, facie ad faciem, nihil ex hoc minus habeant, non hic locus est disputando inquirere.*

² See esp. the second and fourth sermons for All Saints' Day.

³ Hurter, *Compendium*, iii. 553.

restrictions of the bodily life—the growth of asceticism, with its one-sided treatment of the flesh as a dangerous enemy—tended to make the resurrection of the body less of an object of desire or of conscious thought. The increasing reverence for the saints made it seem derogatory to think of them as still waiting for any part of their reward. The privilege which in Tertullian's day was confined to martyrs, was thrown open to other classes of saints. Their reign with Christ was already begun. There was practically nothing more for them to look forward to. When Vigilantius somewhat rudely revived the older teaching, it was received with contumely and derision. A Pope who mooted the question nine hundred years later barely escaped the censures of a heretic by protesting that he had affirmed nothing, but had only caused inquiries to be made. There is but one passage that I remember in the *Paradiso* of Dante which gives any sign that the poet supposed that the saints had still to receive any great increment to their bliss in the resurrection of the body.¹

¹ *Paradiso*, xiv. 43 foll. ; but cp. xxv. 124 foll.

Yet the opinion which John XXII. (in a partial and unsatisfactory form) wished to restore—the opinion which Vigilantius opposed to the saint-worship of his age—the opinion which had been maintained by Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, was, after all, the only one which finds a firm footing in Holy Scripture. Christ is for us in this, as in all other respects, our type and exemplar. Although death was to Him, as we may expect it to be to ourselves, by faith in Him, a liberation of inward powers which in this life had worked under restriction, so that St. Peter can say that, when put to death in the flesh, He was quickened in the spirit,¹ yet it was not at death, nor even at His resurrection, that He entered into His glory, that He assumed His throne, that He went to His Father. Only at His ascension did He go into Heaven. So we must suppose that it is with other men. To die is gain, indeed, to a St. Paul; for it is “to depart and be with Christ.”² He desires to be absent from the body, if there is no other way for him to “be present with the Lord.”³ The condition

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

² Phil. i. 21 foll.

³ 2 Cor. v. 8.

of the Christian dead is, undoubtedly, one of intimate and assured enjoyment of the fellowship of Christ. "To-day," Christ said to one believer, without waiting for the resurrection, "shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."¹ He promised to others, and the promise was at least partially fulfilled at their death, that He would come again and receive them unto Himself, that where He is they might be also.² Although St. Paul says that "to him to live was Christ," yet that sense of the presence of Christ which he expected to experience on dying was so much more satisfying that he calls it "far better."³ And yet it was not to his death that St. Paul looked forward with eager anticipation, but to his resurrection from the dead. He shrank not only from the pain of dying, but from that state into which he believed that death would usher him, with all its nearness to Christ. He did not wish to be "unclothed," but "to be clothed upon;" not to die, but to have the mortal part of him "swallowed up of life," absorbed without

¹ St. Luke xxiii. 43.

² St. John xiv. 3.

³ Phil. i. 23.

dissolution into the spiritual body.¹ It was not the belief that the Lord would soon return which made St. Paul instinctively dwell upon the glories and joys of the life which follows upon the great day of the Lord. He does so because then, and then only, do the saints enter upon their true inheritance, of which the privileges now enjoyed by them in the intermediate state are, as Origen and Austin taught, but a prelude and an antepast, even as their privileges here were but a prelude and an antepast of what they now enjoy.

The thought that there may, for some souls, be something in the nature of a purgatorial process between death and resurrection is no longer regarded among Protestant Christians with the same fear and suspicion that was natural when first "the Romish doctrine" concerning it was discarded. In Switzerland itself, dogmatic theologians like Gretillat² and Bovon³ appear to sift the New Testament in the desire to find a text that may warrant them in believing such a

¹ 2 Cor. v. 4.

² *Théologie Systématique*, iv. 538 foll.

³ *Dogmatique Chrétienne*, ii. 444 foll.

thing. Roman controversialists have endeavoured to make capital out of our candour. "If you mention purgatory to a Protestant," says Perrone, "he becomes furious ; but if you ask whether or no we may acknowledge a state of cleansing and doing away of sin, a school of preparation and waiting, or the like, he readily grants it you, sometimes indeed he will strenuously contend for the acknowledgment of such a state. That," he continues, "is the force of words."¹ And, indeed, if the connotation of the word "purgatory" could be got rid of, few would object to the name. It is in itself a very good name. If we could only blot out the history of the ages between, and get back to St. Austin's "perhaps," and "it may be true," and "we may find or may not find," all would be well enough. According to accredited divines² of the Roman communion, the only propositions concerning purgatory which are *de fide* are the two contained in the Creed of Pope Pius V., "that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained in

¹ *Prælect. Theol.* ii. 127, note 8 (ed. 1894).

² Perrone, *l. c.* 122.

it are helped by the prayers of the faithful." Even this is more than we can be certain of. But practically "the Romish doctrine" remains what it was in the Middle Ages. Until the word "purgatory" can be freed from the taint that it has acquired in the course of ages, men will continue to quarrel with the word, however much they may incline to think that there is a reality which it might be taken to represent.

The scriptural evidence, indeed, for such a belief is very scanty. When our Lord said, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing,"¹ or, "He delivered him unto the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him,"² He did not necessarily imply that the last farthing could ever be paid, or the debt of ten thousand talents ever extinguished. It is in any case more natural to suppose that He refers to a chastisement following upon the great day of reckoning, than to something between death and it. When He says that one class of sins "hath never forgiveness, neither in this world

¹ St. Matt. v. 26.

² St. Matt. xviii. 34.

nor in the world to come,"¹ He does not necessarily imply (as Austin thought) that there are sins which are forgiven in the world to come, though unforgiven in this; and if He does, it may well be doubted whether "the world to come" includes the period between death and the resurrection, and does not always mean the new state of things which follows upon the Judgment Day. When St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, uses the language upon which, historically speaking, the doctrine of purgatory is based,² two things must be noted which make against that interpretation. First, he expressly assigns the testing fire to "the day," the great day of Judgment, and not to a period before it. Secondly, it is the man's work that is tried by the fire, and not the man;—nor, I may add, is it at all natural in the context to understand the "wood, hay, stubble" as Origen, Austin, and the patristic commentators in general do, of sins which the man has committed, but rather of the futile results of some men's ministerial labour upon the spiritual

¹ St. Matt. xii. 32.

² 1 Cor. iii. 13.

fabric of the Church. The texts melt away when examined.

There is, perhaps, only one passage in the New Testament which can be used with any confidence in this connexion. It is the famous passage about "the spirits in prison."¹ Its meaning is still disputed, though Professor Charles, in his work on Eschatology, says boldly that it can only be interpreted in one of two ways :² the spirits in question are either those of dead men, or they are the fallen angels mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. Dr. Charles afterwards—as I think, rightly—restricts himself to the former view. In the interval between His death and resurrection, our Blessed Lord, we are told, was not inactive. "He went"—there was something answering to movement—"and preached"—there was an operative ministry—to those who were in a like disembodied condition to His own—"to the spirits in prison." Whether He preached to any other spirits, we are not told : St. Peter

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 19.

² *Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian*, p. 376.

had a special purpose in speaking of this particular class or group of spirits. The spirits in prison either were, or at any rate included, those of men who had lived lives so sinful, so disobedient to the warnings which they received, so persistent in disobedience during the long time that the ark was preparing, that at last they perished in the waters of the flood. The specific contents of the Lord's preaching to them are not described ; but, a few lines lower down, St. Peter, clearly referring to the same persons, says, "For this cause was the gospel preached to men who were dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."¹ What exactly these last words mean, I need not now stop to inquire ; but unless this interpretation is wholly wrong, not in detail only, but in gross also, we may say that in St. Peter's view men between death and resurrection are capable of receiving an access of knowledge, that some who in that spirit-world endure a penal confinement for their sins may yet have

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 6.

glad tidings brought to them ; and though St. Peter does not distinctly affirm that they were loosed from their confinement, yet, loosed or not, the intended effect of the glad tidings brought to them was "that they should live according to God in the spirit," which at least implies some change of estate for the better.

If this was the case with the sinners of the time of Noah, there seems to be no reason why others may not be treated in like manner—such souls, for instance, as those of the Corinthians, of whom St. Paul says that their "falling asleep" was "a judgment" upon them for their profanation of the Eucharist, but a judgment sent that they "should not be damned along with the world."¹ Every day there pass away from amongst us men whose career has been anything but satisfactory, even to the last, who have yet had their good points. We cannot always tell what is passing in such souls at the moment of death. "When He slew them, they sought Him,"² is a text of good

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 32.

² Ps. lxxviii. 34. See Bishop Andrewes' First Sermon on Repentance.

hope. It is a great consolation if we are allowed to think that such souls, through the mercy of God, may pass hereafter through a process that may refine and cleanse them. There is no need to imagine for them torments inflicted by a stern justice, which will not forgive sin without proportionate punishment. Of the method pursued we are perhaps unable to form any notion. It is enough to know that they are in the hands of a faithful Creator and of a wise and merciful Father.

But perhaps other and better spirits may likewise be subjected to an improving discipline hereafter. Many good and holy Christians would be glad to be allowed to experience in their place of rest some purifying sorrows. It is a distress to them that at present they can feel so little grief for their sins, though they strive after a deeper penitence. This is the conception of purgatory that has found favour with many not unenlightened Protestant thinkers. It comforts them to think that their penitence may be completed in the repose that comes with death. "Nearly all (teachers, ancient and

modern)," says the large-minded Leibnitz—putting, it must be owned, a generous construction upon the doctrine of purgatory as taught by the more modern of the teachers whom he has in view—"have agreed that there is a fatherly chastening or purification after this life, whatever it might consist in. The souls themselves, on their departure from the body, receive enlightenment; and seeing for themselves now for the first time the shortcomings of the life that they have ended, and deeply pained by the sense of the horribleness of sin, they welcome the chastening with satisfaction, and would not, if they could, pass to their blissful consummation without it." ¹

I cannot but quote the deep words of the Lutheran Martensen, though they will be familiar to many of you. "The kingdom of the dead," he says, "is a kingdom of remembrance. The soul now enters into its own inmost recesses, resorts to that which is the very foundation of

¹ *Système Théol.* p. 350 (ed. 1819), quoted by Perrone, *Prælectiones*, ii. p. 123. Perrone gives an interesting list of Protestant authors who have taken a similar line.

life, the true substratum and source of all existence. Hence arises the purgatorial nature of this state. As long as man is in this present world, he is in a kingdom of externals, wherein he can escape from self-contemplation and self-knowledge by the distractions of time, the noise and tumult of the world; but at death he enters upon a kingdom the opposite of all this. . . . His soul finds itself in a kingdom of pure realities. The manifold voices of this worldly life . . . grow dumb, and the Holy Voice now sounds alone . . . and hence the realm of the dead becomes a realm of judgments. . . . So far is the human soul in this state from drinking forgetfulness, that it may evermore be said, 'Their works do follow them,' . . . a recollection . . . which presents to view the real and deepest truth of consciousness, which may not only be comforting and bliss-giving, but judging and condemning truth also."¹

Do I seem to have revoked to-day what I

¹ *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 457 foll. (Engl. tr.). Cp. J. A. Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. p. 408 foll. (Eng. tr.).

said at the close of my last lecture? I trust not. I take up the position of St. Austin, and acknowledge that it is all a possibility, not a revealed truth. The Word of God does not declare to us in unmistakable terms that there are any purgatorial processes at all after this life. If some of the saved children of God are permitted after death to perfect their penitence in some such manner as I have spoken of, that discipline must be compatible with the promises which all can plainly read in the Bible—with the assurance of forgiveness, with the sense of Christ's presence and companionship, with the fellowship of the saints, with the sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection,—with rest, and peace, and light, and refreshment, and enjoyment. Our prayers for them need not bear any tone or tinge of distress or of anxiety. "They are at peace." They are just where they would wish to be. Even Dante, with all his sense of the pains of purgatory, can greet his acquaintance there with

"Belacqua, a me non duole
Di te omai."¹

¹ *Purgatorio*, iv. 123.

And St. Catherine of Genoa, with an even more terrible conception of that state, says that souls "throw themselves eagerly into it," and that if they found nothing of the kind to help them, it "would create a hell within them worse than purgatory." "I do not believe," she says, "that a contentment can be found comparable to that of a soul in purgatory, except that of the saints in paradise, and every day this contentment grows and grows ; and so far as their will is concerned they cannot say that their pains are pains."¹ If such is the view entertained by one who could say that no tongue could express and no understanding take in the smallest notion of the greatness of those pains, then the tenderest-hearted Christian need take no alarm at the reasonable purgatory of a Leibnitz or a Martensen.

¹ Quoted by Perrone, *loc. cit.*

LECTURE III.

THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

ONE part of the XXIInd Article engaged our attention in the two previous lectures. It was that part of it which affirms that "the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory . . . is a fond thing vainly invented." We turn now to another part of it.

If masses for the dead formed one of the chief features of mediaeval religious life, the Invocation of Saints was scarcely less prominent. Pilgrimages, together with the cultus of images and of relics, were closely bound up with this invocation ; for although in some instances the relics or images to which resort was made were images or relics of our Lord Himself, like Boxley Rood or the Blood of Hales, yet for

the most part the pilgrimages were to famous objects connected with saints, especially to wonder-working images of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, one of the chief objections to the whole system was that it tended not merely to exalt the saints to the position of our Lord, but to drag Him down to the level on which the saints were placed. That such a cultus, indeed, was often degraded into mere idolatry, in nothing removed from the idolatry of the heathen, was evinced by the frequenting of such monstrosities as Darvelgadarn and Conoch in Wales, which, so far as is known, were unconnected with any saint or any Christian ideas. In all probability these were, as Bishop Barlow picturesquely described them, "Welsh gods," "antique gargoyles of idolatry;" though it was said that Darvelgadarn had not only power over purgatory, but that he could bring a damned soul out of hell.¹

It was in this connexion that our Article so sternly repudiated the Romish doctrine

¹ *Letters relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries* (Camden Soc.), pp. 208, 190.

concerning Invocation of Saints as well as concerning purgatory. Its words are that that doctrine concerning "Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as Relics, and also Invocation of Saints," is "grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." The Article does not indeed imply that in some other connexion the Invocation of Saints would be allowable; but it purposely treats of it as conjoined with the Worshipping of Images and Relics.

It is difficult to ascertain how the Invocation of departed Saints first arose in the Christian Church. It was certainly not practised, as praying for the dead was, among the Jews of the Apostolic age; indeed, if I am not mistaken, great as is their reverence for the mighty forefathers of their race, the custom has never been adopted among the Jews. They believed, indeed, that the departed engage in intercession for the living, as Jeremias, for instance, was seen pleading for the Jews in the days of the Maccabees;¹ but there is no indication that

¹ 2 Macc. xv. 14.

attempts were made to enlist such intercessions by direct appeal. No trace of such a custom is to be found in the New Testament. That it was unknown in the earliest ages of Christianity is shown by the very same evidence which proves the antiquity of praying for the dead. When Tertullian wishes to insist upon the authority of unwritten Tradition, he asks, among other things, what Scripture prescribes the praying for the dead, which nevertheless he considers to have been inculcated by the Apostles. If he had known the Invocation of Saints as a traditional practice of the Church, he could hardly have avoided alleging it. Origen, who has much to say about the intercession of the departed for the living, not only bears a negative witness against the practice of Invocation by never recommending it in places where it would naturally come in, but distinctly testifies that the assistance of the saints comes unsought. The favour of the supreme God alone, he says, is to be cultivated; but, when we gain His favour, as the shadow moves with the motion of the body, so we gain the favour

also of "all the friends of God, angels and souls and spirits," and "when we pray to God, ten thousand holy powers pray with us uninvoked."¹ It would have suited his point exactly to have spoken of prayers to the departed if he had known and approved of the use of them; and the fact that he does not, seems to show that the practice was as yet unborn. The Catacombs have been ransacked for invocations of the departed in the century of Origen and of Cyprian, but without much success. It is true that men in that century are asked,

¹ *Adv. Celsum*, viii. 64: Μυρία ὄσαι ἄγγελοι συνεύχονται δυνάμεις ἱερὰς. One passage of Origen's treatise on prayer has been referred to as if the author permitted the offering of "supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings" to the saints (*de Orat.* xiv. 6, ed. Köttschau): Δέσιν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν οὐκ ἄτοπον καὶ ἀνθρώποις [ἁγίοις] προσεγγεῖν· ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν δύο (λέγω δὴ ἐντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν) οὐ μόνον ἁγίοις ἀλλὰ καὶ [ἄλλοις] ἀνθρώποις, τὴν δὲ δέσιν μόνον ἁγίοις, εἴ τις εὐρεθείη Παῦλος ἢ Πέτρος, ἵνα ὠφελήσωσιν ἡμᾶς, ἀξιόους ποιῶντες τοῦ τυχεῖν τῆς δεδομένης αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίας πρὸς τὰ ἀμαρτήματα ἀφιέναι. But the word ἁγίοις in that passage does not contrast "the saints"—i.e. departed saints—with persons still living; it contrasts "holy men" with men who are not holy. It is clear from the εἴ τις εὐρεθείη that Origen was not thinking of addresses to "Paul or Peter" themselves, or to other such persons who had departed this life, but of finding living men to whom such addresses could be offered.

while still living, to pray, when they die, for those whom they leave behind. Thus Cyprian implores the virgins for whom he wrote the treatise *De Habitu Virginum* to remember him when their virginity should receive its reward,¹ and engages with Cornelius that whichever of them should die first should continue his intercessions for the brethren on earth.² It was natural to inscribe wishes of the same kind upon the graves of friends. "Marinus, keep us both in mind, and our dear daughter Macriana." "Atticus, sleep in peace, without fears for thy salvation, and pray earnestly for our sins." "Pray for us in company with the saints." "Gentianus, pray for us, for we know that thou art in Christ." Such addresses are common enough ;³ but it is not natural to consider them to be direct invocations of the dead. Even addresses commending a dead friend to the patronage of the martyrs whose relics lay near are only of the same character. "O

¹ *De Hab. Virg.* 24.

² *Epist.* lx. 5 (Hartel).

³ See Atzberger, *Eschatol.* p. 621 foll. ; Kirsch, *Gemeinsch. d. Heil.* p. 95 foll.

Paulus, let the spirits of all the saints welcome thee into peace." "I commend to thee, O Basilla, the innocent Gemellus." "O Lady Basilla, we, Crescentinus and Micina, commend to thee our child Crescentina, who lived ten months and [some] days."¹ Such inscriptions undoubtedly prepare the way for vocal appeals, but they are no proof that vocal appeals to the saints were already used. I am far from denying that they may have been used in the third century; but they cannot have been widely used, and there is no convincing proof that they were used at all.² It is not until the latter part of the fourth century that the practice is clearly observed.

¹ Atsberger, p. 626; Kirsch, p. 96 foll.

² The nearest approach to an invocation to be found in the literature of the third century is the apostrophe of Hippolytus to the Three Children (*Comm. in Daniel*, ii. 30): Εἴπατέ μοι, τρεῖς παῖδες,—μῆσθητέ μου, παρακαλῶ, ἵνα καὶ ἐγὼ σὺν ὑμῖν τὸν αὐτὸν κλῆρον τὸν τῆς μαρτυρίας λάβω—τίς ἦν τέταρτος σὺν ὑμῖν ὃ ἐν μέσῳ τῆς καμίνου περιπατῶν; As Kirsch says (*Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*, p. 90), it is "no mere rhetorical formula,"—for the author most likely believed that as a matter of fact the saints were interceding for us; but there is no sign that he expected the Three Children to answer his request to be remembered any more than his request to be told who was the fourth with them.

Then, all of a sudden, it is unquestioned and unquestionable.

The connexion in which this invocation is placed by our Article is in all probability that in which it historically arose, *i.e.* the connexion with relics of the saints. Reverence for the bodies of the martyrs was among the most natural and legitimate of human impulses; but it was soon cast as a reproach in the teeth of Christians. The Evil One, says the letter which relates the martyrdom of Polycarp—the genuineness of which I see no reason to question—“put forward (one) to plead with the magistrates not to give up his body, ‘lest,’ so it was said, ‘they should abandon the Crucified One and begin to worship this man.’” The writers vehemently repel the suggestion that such a thing was possible. “Him,” they say, “being the Son of God, we adore; but the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we cherish as they deserve for their matchless affection towards their own King and Teacher.”¹ When the body was

¹ *Mart. Polyc.* 17.

burned, "we afterwards took up his bones," they proceed, "which are more valuable than precious stones, and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place ; where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter."¹ Lactantius, at the opening of the fourth century, likens the persecuting Emperor to a savage beast, "who not only tears in pieces men's limbs, but breaks up their bones, and spends his fury even upon their ashes, that they may have no visible place of burial, as if what the worshippers of God cared for were to get access to their sepulchres, and not that the martyrs should come to God."² "The palace servants," says

¹ *Mart. Polyc.* 18.

² *Div. Inst.* v. 11: *Non tantum artus hominum dissipat, sed et ossa ipsa comminuit, et in cineres furit, ne quis exlat sepulchrae locus ; quasi uero id affectent, qui deum confitentur, ut ad eorum sepulchra ueniantur, ac non ut ipsi ad deum perueniant.*

Eusebius, speaking of the first outbreak of the persecution of Diocletian at Nicomedia, "who after their death had been committed with due care to the earth, were dug up again by their masters, who thought it necessary to throw them into the sea, that they might not be in tombs where they would receive worship from persons who, they supposed, would consider them to be gods."¹

Such was the impression left upon the minds of the heathen of the fourth century by the honours which Christians paid to the relics of the martyrs. Nor was the impression by the middle of that century wholly without justification. The thing which at an earlier period had caused but a malevolent insinuation, came by the time of Julian to furnish a deliberate accusation which it was not so easy to meet. "If only," cries the apostate Emperor to the Christians, "you had attended to the teaching of the Jews (to whom you went over from us), and had not enrolled yourselves under a most unhappy name, you would indeed have been worse off than you

¹ *Hist. Eccl.* VIII. vi. 7.

were before, when with us, but your condition would still have been supportable and tolerable ; for in the place of many gods you would at least have worshipped one God and not a man—or rather a number of unhappy men. Though you would have lived under a harsh and severe law, containing much that is rough and barbarous, instead of our mild and kindly laws, yet, in spite of some disadvantages, you would at least have been purer and less corrupt in your religious rites.”¹

Cyril of Alexandria repels the accusation of Julian, and draws the difference between the honours offered to the martyrs and the honours offered to God ; and so does his contemporary Augustine ;² but nevertheless a change had

¹ *Ap. Cyril. Al. c. Iul. vi. p. 201 (Aubert):* Εἰ τοῖς ἐκείνων γοῦν προσείχετε λόγοις, καὶ οὐ παντάπασιν ἐπεγράφητε δυστυχῶς, ἀλλὰ χεῖρον μὲν ἢ πρότερον, ὅποτε σὺν ἡμῖν ἦτε, οἰστὰ δὲ ὅμως πεπρόνθαιτε ἂν καὶ φορητὰ. “Ἐνα γὰρ ἀντὶ πολλῶν θεῶν ἐσέβεσθε ἂν, οὐκ ἄνθρωπον, μᾶλλον καὶ πολλοὺς ἀνθρώπους δυστυχεῖς· καὶ νόμῳ σκληρῷ μὲν καὶ τραχεῖ καὶ πολλὰ τὸ ἄγριον ἔχοντι καὶ βάρβαρον ἀντὶ τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν ἐπιεικῶν καὶ φιλανθρώπων χρώμενοι, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα χεῖρονες ἂν ἦτε, ἀγνότεροι δὲ καὶ καθαρώτεροι τὰς ἀγιστείας.

² *Cyr. Al. loc. cit. p. 203:* Τοὺς γε μὴν ἁγίους μάρτυρας οὕτε θεοὺς εἶναι φάμεν, οὕτε προσκυνεῖν εἰθίσμεθα λατρευτικῶς δηλονότι, ἀλλὰ σχετικῶς καὶ τιμητικῶς. *Aug. C. Finist. Man. xx. 21:*

come over the attitude of Christians towards the heroes of their faith. The last and most tremendous of the persecutions did harm. If the "world-rulers of this darkness" failed to stamp out by it the Church's existence,—if indeed in some ways the assault served to renew the Church's devotion and to consolidate its energies,—yet even the victory of the Church was not won without some compensating injury. The tendency to exalt martyrdom to an unwarranted height had long been at work in the Church. Cyprian had fought against it in the interests of ecclesiastical discipline. At each successive struggle—every one, more intense than the last—this tendency had increased. The permanent effect of the persecution of Diocletian, regarded from the enemy's point of view, was the establishment of a new polytheism in the Church under the guise of honouring the champions of monotheism.¹ That which was

Populus autem christianus memorias martyrum religiosa sollemnitate concelebrat, et ad excitandam imitationem, et ut merit eorum consocietur atque orationibus adiuvetur; ita tamen u. nulli martyrum sed ipsi deo martyrum, quamvis in memoriis martyrum, constituamus allaria.

¹ Kirsch, *Gem. der Heil.* p. 175, says candidly: "Es ist kaum

a cruel calumny on the part of the men who slew Polycarp was a well-directed home-thrust from the hand of an Emperor who had, outwardly at any rate, joined in the services of Christendom.

It is a curious fact that the particular point of transition from the earlier cultus of the martyrs to that which might deserve the censures of Julian is marked by no explicit protest and by no explicit championship. It was the point at which prayers and praises began to be directly addressed to them. It is not as if there had been no Christians who observed and endeavoured to check the general tendency towards super-

zu beweifeln, dass das ungebildete Volk vielfach in abergläubischer Weise, durch die bloss materielle Nähe der Ueberreste eines Martyrers beim Grabe, Schütz und Hülfe für die abgeschiedenen Seelen erwartete." Cp. p. 130 foll., where, after speaking of the way in which the cultus of the saints during the fourth and fifth centuries attached itself more than before to their sepulchres and relics, and the invocation of them was increasingly used to obtain miraculous assistances in earthly things, he says: "Dabei schlichen sich in der Auffassung der Verehrung wie in der praktischen Bethätigung derselben von Seiten des Volkes falsche Ansichten und Missbräuche ein, die zum Theil auf heidnischen abergläubischen Vorstellungen beruhten."

stition in these matters. Such an one was Caecilian of Carthage in the time of Diocletian. A factious lady, as Optatus calls her, of the name of Lucilla, was in the habit of carrying about with her a bone of some martyr, or of one whom she supposed to have been a martyr, and every time that she made her communion, before doing so, she produced the bone and kissed it. For this she was reprov'd by Caecilian, and the reproof led eventually to the formation of the Donatist schism. It was easy, amidst the fiery enthusiasms of the African Church, to make out that Caecilian was lacking in devotion to the martyrs, and therefore a traitor to the cause in which the martyrs died. If, indeed, Lucilla did no more than kiss her relic, it was perhaps unnecessary to interfere with her. There is nothing necessarily superstitious in such an action. A man may treasure and kiss a tress of his dead mother's hair without incurring any worse charge than that of filial piety. It was not for the simple act of reverence that Caecilian reprov'd Lucilla. If Optatus represents the incident correctly, it

was because Lucilla's manner of proceeding showed—though how, we are not informed—that she put more faith in the virtue of her relic than in the Blessed Sacrament which she was about to receive; she “thought more,” he says, “of some dead man's bone than she did of the Cup of Salvation.”¹ The heathenish superstition of the act was the more flagrant, inasmuch as it was uncertain whether the precious fragment had as a matter of fact formed any part of a martyr's body: the man had at least not received ecclesiastical recognition as a martyr.

But the Lucillas proved to be a more numerous and influential party in the Church than the Caecilians. In Italy, it is true, men looked with disapproval upon some customs which had grown up in the more emotional South, and it is well known how St. Ambrose at Milan forbade the African Monnica to make her modest little feast at the churches of the

¹ *De Schism. Donat.* 16 foll. : *Feminam factiosam . . . quas ante spiritalem cibum et potum os nescio cuius martyris, si tamen martyris, libare dicebatur; et cum praeponeret calici salutari os nescio cuius hominis mortui, et si martyris, sed necdum vindicati, correpta cum confusione discessit irata.*

city on the anniversaries of the patron saints, not only for fear of encouraging excess, but also (St. Austin says) because those solemnities "did much resemble the superstition of the Gentiles." But Austin himself was surprised at his mother's obedience.¹ It became a more and more unpopular thing to resist the growing movement. When Vigilantius raised his voice against the corruption of Christianity which his lifetime had witnessed, it was remarked as a strange thing that he carried with him his bishop, and a portion of the clergy of the diocese.²

But even Vigilantius failed to discern the real point upon which he should have fixed his attack. He objected to the outward tokens of reverence

¹ *Conf.* vi. 2 : *Quia illa quasi parentalia superstitioni gentilium essent simillima.* A little below : *Sed tamen uidetur mihi, domine deus meus, et ita est in conspectu tuo de hac re cor meum, non facile fortasse de hac amputanda consuetudine matrem meam fuisse cessuram, si ab alio prohiberetur, quem non sicut Ambrosius diligebat.*

² *Hier. Adv. Vigil.* p. 281 (Martianay) : *Proh nefas, episcopos sui sceleris dicitur habere consortes, si tamen episcopi nominandi sunt ;* p. 282 : *Asserunt repertos esse nonnullos qui fauentes uitiiis suis illius blasphemias acquiescant.*

which were offered to the relics of the martyrs. He disapproved of their being brought into the churches. He deprecated the seeking for miracles at their tombs. He exposed the danger of holding all-night vigils beside them. He ridiculed the notion that the spirits of the martyrs were to be found tied to the spot where their bodies lay. He went so far as to deny that the faithful departed intercede for the Church on earth. "What need is there," he cried, "not only to honour but also to worship the thing which you carry about devoutly in a little case? Why do you wrap dust in a linen cloth and bestow the kisses of adoration upon it? We see something like a heathen rite introduced into the churches under pretext of religion, when huge tapers are lighted while the sun is still shining, and wherever they go they kiss and worship a pinch of dust in a little case wrapped up in a costly cloth. It is a mighty honour which these men bestow upon the blessed martyrs, whom they think fit to lighten with their cheap tapers, when the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne doth lighten them with all the glory of

His majesty." ¹ Yet the one thing which made the difference between such honour as might have been paid by St. Paul to the relics of St. Stephen, and that which had become fashionable in the fourth century, Vigilantius passed over unnoticed. Either it was still unpractised in the parts of Gaul and Spain with which he was familiar, or he did not feel that it was so serious an encroachment of heathenish sentiment as the ceremonial acts which accompanied it. In any case he laid no stress upon it in his polemic. He did not, so far as we can tell, attack the Invocation of the Saints—the direct appeal to them for aid, whether by their prayers or otherwise.

The reply of Jerome to the remonstrances of Vigilantius, his former admirer and friend, is perhaps the saddest reading in all the Fathers—even sadder than his onslaught upon the somewhat similar movement of Jovinian; for Vigilantius was a man of wider views and more modest utterance than Jovinian. There is little spiritual insight in Jerome's strictures, and no

¹ Hier. *Adv. Vigil.* p. 282.

sympathy for what seems to have been an honest effort to preserve the purity of the Gospel. It is an easy thing for him to show that even if the lighting of candles is a pagan ceremony, the ceremony is none the less appropriate for Christian purposes. He has but little besides to contribute to the Catholic cause. To others—and those not the least liberal or learned—the very fact that there was a similarity between the cultus of the saints and that of the pagan demigods was a matter of pleasure and satisfaction. Eusebius—though it must be observed that Eusebius says nothing to imply any invocation of the saints—made it part of the preparation for the Gospel that Plato had inculcated the paying of honours to the heroes. He considered it a kind of divinely ordered type or prophecy of what was done in the Christian Church.¹ Theodoret, who

¹ *Præp. Evang.* xiii. 11: Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ ἀρμόζει. ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν θεοφίλων τελευτῇ, οὗς στρατιώτας τῆς ἀληθοῦς εὐσεβείας οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοις εἰπὼν, παραλαμβάνεσθαι. "Ὅθεν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς θήκας αὐτῶν ἔθος ἡμῶν παρίναί, καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς παρὰ ταύταις ποιεῖσθαι, τιμῶν τε τὰς μακαρίας αὐτῶν ψυχὰς, ὡς εὐλόγως καὶ τούτων ὑφ' ἡμῶν γιγρομένων.

mentions the novel practice of invocation with approval, rejoiced that the Pandian and Dionysian festivals had given place to those of Peter and Paul, of Thomas and Sergius, whose tombs were hung with models of the eyes and other members that had been healed by them, as formerly the heathen shrines had been.¹ If only some clear and respected voice could have pointed out exactly, yet with reverence, where superstition came in—at using relics like a magical charm,—and where polytheism came in—at addressing direct prayers and praises to the saints, it might perhaps have found a hearing. As it was, the language of Vigilantius only shocked the sentiment of the age. He was thought to have spoken contemptuously of the martyrs, to have

¹ *Græc. Affect. Cur.* viii. *ad fin.*: Τοὺς γὰρ οὐκ εὐλαβεῖς νεκρῶν δὲ δεσποτῆς ἀντίσκηψε τοῖς ὑμετέροις θεοῖς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν φρούρους ἀπέφηνε, τοῦτοις δὲ τὰ ἐκείνων ἀπέπειμα γέγρα, ἀπὶ γὰρ δὴ τῶν Πανδίων καὶ Διασίων καὶ Διονυσίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὁμῶν ἑορτῶν, Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου καὶ Θωμᾶ καὶ Σεργίου καὶ Μαρκελλοῦ καὶ Λεοντίου καὶ Παντελεήμονος καὶ Ἀντωνίου καὶ Μαυρικίου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μαρτύρων ἐπιτελοῦνται δημοβοῖαι· καὶ ἀπὶ τῆς πόλεως πομπεῖας καὶ αἰσχρογυγίας καὶ αἰσχρορρημασύνης, σάφρονες ἑορτάζονται πανηγύρεις, οὐ μέθην ἔχουσαι καὶ κῶμον καὶ γέλωτα, ἀλλ' ὕμνους θέουσιν καὶ ἱερῶν λογίων ἀκρόασιν καὶ προσευχῇν ἀξιεπαύους κοσμουμένην θαυροῖς. The whole preceding passage is of great interest.

treated with blasphemy their sacred remains and resting-places.

It is true that the first invocations of departed Christians now actually on record are harmless compared with those of the later Middle Ages to which our Article refers. The earliest specimens—if they are not those contained in various poems of Pope Damasus—are some which occur in the sermons of his contemporary, Jerome's master, Gregory of Nazianzus. They are in the highest degree rhetorical. They consist more of panegyric than of petition. The sacred orator is himself uncertain—perhaps more than uncertain—whether the object of his eulogy is aware of it. "If thou dost reckon of what we do," cries Gregory, at the close of his oration on his sister, "and if this is a reward from God to holy souls to be aware of such things, mayest thou receive this oration of mine instead of—in preference to—many funeral observances."¹ "These are the first fruits of

¹ *Or. viii. ad fin.*: Εἰ δέ τις σοι καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐστὶ λόγος, καὶ τοῦτο ταῖς ὁσiais ψυχαῖς ἐκ θεοῦ γέρας τῶν τοιούτων ἐπαισθάνεσθαι, δέχοιο καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον λόγον ἀντὶ πολλῶν καὶ πρὸ πολλῶν ἐνταφίων.

my words," so he addresses the wizard whom he confounded with the great Cyprian, "O divine and sacred being. Mayest thou from on high behold me favourably, and direct our word and life, and feed or join me in feeding this sacred flock, directing all things to the best advantage, and especially turning away the grievous wolves, who hunt after syllables and turns of phrase, and granting us a more perfect and a brighter illumination of the holy Trinity."¹ Towards the end of his oration on his deceased father, he apostrophizes the departed saint, asking whether he has said enough, or whether he shall go on. "Suffer me," he cries, "to add one thing more. Make known to us where thou art in glory, and the light that surrounds thee and thy children whom thou didst bury in thy lifetime; and receive me also in the same tabernacles, without suffering any more, or but little more, in this life."² "This is my offering to thee, O Basil," he concludes one of his loftiest

¹ Or. xxiv. *ad fin.* : Ἄν δὲ ἡμῶς ἐποπτεύοις ἄνωθεν θεῶς, καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον διαξάγοις λόγον καὶ βίον, κ.τ.λ.

² Or. xviii. : Τί φῆς, ὦ πάτερ; ἰκανὰ ταῦτα; . . . ἐκεῖνο δὲ προσθεῖναι συγχώρησον· γνῶρισον ἡμῖν ποῦ ποτε εἰ δόξης, κ.τ.λ.

orations, in honour of his dead friend ; "if it approaches to being adequate, to thee the thanks are due, for in reliance upon thee I began my oration concerning thee. . . . And mayest thou look upon me from on high, O divine and sacred being ; and the stake in the flesh which is given me from God for my discipline—mayest thou either put a stop to it by thy intercessions, or procure that I may bear it bravely ; and mayest thou direct my whole life to the greatest profit ; and if I should be removed, mayest thou receive me yonder in thine own tabernacles."¹

The rhetorical character of these sentences, the "if" with which Gregory speaks of the knowledge of the departed with regard to things in this world, the optatives in which, rather than in the imperative, his desires are couched—all show that such invocations are only on the borderland of invocation. They are invocations only in the same sense in which Tennyson invokes Hallam—

¹ Or. xliii. *ad fin.* ; Ταῦτά σοι παρ' ἡμῶν, ὦ Βασιλεῖ, . . . εἰ μὲν τῆς ἀξίας ἐγγύς, σὴ τοῦτο χάρις· σοὶ γὰρ θαρρῶν τὸν περὶ σοῦ λόγον ἐνεστησάμην . . . σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύεις ἄνωθεν, κ.τ.λ.

"Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of being slow."
"Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt."

They undoubtedly express a hope and a longing, but there is about them nothing of the security of prayer. Yet these Cappadocian divines, so enlightened themselves, and so free from personal superstition, felt no fear of encouraging other men in the dangerous practice, and acquiesced in believing in its effectual force. "Bethink you of the martyr," says Basil at the festival and sepulchre of St. Mamas, "all you who in dreams have had the benefit of him ; all who finding yourselves at this place have had him as your fellow-labourer in prayer ; and all who have called upon him by name when at work and found him at hand ; all whom he has brought home from journeys, or restored from sickness ; to whom he has given back your children when they were already dead ; for whom he has extended the appointed boundaries of life."¹ When it comes to this, we are already

¹ *Hom. in Mamanem Mart.* 1 : Μηθεὺς μοι τοῦ μάρτυρος

confronted with the kind of thing which the Article condemns, though there may be a wide difference in the extent to which it is carried.

You will observe that almost invariably the invocations of saints of which we read in early days occurred at the places of their burial, or where some relics of them were to be found. The effect of this was to bring forward a vast number of saints—principally martyrs—who enjoyed a local reputation, but were not much known away from home. The prayers of the faithful were not much addressed, as it would seem, to the great Catholic saints. Except when men went on pilgrimage to the *limina apostolorum*, as Paulinus of Nola, for instance, did every year, they did not often seek the aid of St. Peter or St. Paul. A Felix, or a Theodore,

ἄσσοι δι' ὀνείρων αὐτοῦ ἀπηλαύσατε, ἄσσοι περιτυχόντες τῷ τόπῳ
τοῦτῃ ἐσχέκισαν αὐτὸν συνεργὸν εἰς προσευχὴν, ἄσσοι δυνάμει
κληθεὶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων παρίστη, ἄσσοι δόκιμους ἐπαυγάγεν,
ἄσσοι ἐξ ἀρρωστίας ἀνέστησεν, ἄσσοι παῖδας ἀπέδωκεν ἡδὴ τετε-
λευτηκότας, ἄσσοι προθεσμίας βίου μακροτέρας ἐποίησεν. The
fragment numbered Epist. ccclx. in the Benedictine ed. of Basil,
in which the writer speaks of invoking the saints himself and
worshipping their images, is clearly of a later date, and is rightly
reckoned spurious by the editors.

or a Mamas, or a Babylas, who happened to have died and to be buried on the spot was more resorted to as an intercessor than greater personages far away. If a man lived at Uzalis, where lay the reputed bones of St. Stephen, he naturally applied to St. Stephen,¹ but he would probably not have thought of doing so had he lived elsewhere. Although the fourth and fifth centuries saw a great increase in the respect paid to the Blessed Mother of our Lord—partly because of the developing sense of the glory of virginity, partly on account of the Nestorian heresy which outraged men's minds by denying that her Child was also her God at the moment when she bore Him—yet it does not appear that there was any general disposition to turn to her for succour. Gregory of Nazianzus mentions an instance where a virgin in distress turned to God, claiming the protection of Christ her Spouse, “and supplicating the Virgin Mary to aid a virgin in peril.”² But it would seem that

¹ Aug. *Serm.* cccxiv.

² Or. xiv. 11: *Kal tēn parthēnon Maryan katebousa βοηθήσαι παρθένω καθυστενύοντι.* Kirsch, *Gemeinsch. d. Heil.* p. 201,

it was only the fact that she was herself devoted to virginity which made her seek help from Mary. I know of no similar instance, and none of recommending recourse to Mary, for some centuries after Gregory's time.

It is much to be wished that we knew more exactly than we do, at what date the invocations of saints were introduced into the various liturgical formularies of Christendom. According to Augustine, it is an affront to pray for any martyr; we ought rather to commend ourselves to their prayers.¹ This was not everywhere the view of the Christian Church, even in Augustine's time. "We make our memorial," says Epiphanius, his elder contemporary, "both for

acknowledges that among the teachers of the Ante-Nicene period there is no sign of any special devotion to Mary. "Eine besondere Verehrung oder eine Anrufung derselben, ähnlich wie in bezug auf die Apostel und Martyrer, finden wir nicht in den Schriften jener Zeit bezeugt." He thinks (p. 203) that we may conclude from the notice in Gregory Naz. that the custom had become by his time general.

¹ Serm. clix. 1: *Ideoque habet ecclesiastica disciplina, quod fideles nouerunt, cum martyres eo loco recitantur ad altare dei, ubi non pro ipsis oratur; pro ceteris autem commemoratis defunctis oratur. Iniuria est enim pro martyre orare, cuius nos debemus orationibus commendari.*

the righteous and for sinners; . . . for the righteous, for fathers and patriarchs, prophets and apostles and evangelists, and martyrs and confessors, bishops and hermits, and for the whole estate, in order that we may separate the Lord Jesus Christ from the station of men, bearing in mind that the Lord is not to be put on the same footing with any man," however holy he may be.¹ Epiphanius of Cyprus, who tore down the embroidered curtain in which he discerned a peril of idolatry, represents the old expiring orthodoxy of the days of conflict with paganism. The older form still survives in many of the Eastern liturgies. "O Lord our God," says, for example, the Alexandrian Liturgy of St. Mark, "remember and rest the souls of our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep before us, . . . of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, . . . of our holy father Mark, the Apostle and Evange-

¹ *Haer.* lxxv. 7: Ὑπὲρ δικαίων ποιοῦμεθα τὴν μνήμην καὶ ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτωλῶν· ὑπὲρ μὲν ἁμαρτωλῶν ὑπὲρ ἐλέους θεοῦ δεόμενοι, ὑπὲρ δὲ δικαίων καὶ πατέρων καὶ πατριάρχων, προφητῶν καὶ ἀποστόλων καὶ εὐαγγελιστῶν καὶ μαρτύρων καὶ ὁμολογητῶν, ἐπισκόπων τε καὶ ἀναχωρητῶν καὶ πάντος τοῦ τάγματος, ἵνα τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀφορίσωμεν ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τάξεως.

list;" and then, after the Angelic Salutation, "and specially of our all-holy, spotless, blessed lady, Mary the mother of God, ever-virgin."¹ At Jerusalem the custom of praying for the great saints had been abandoned in the lifetime of Epiphanius, if not before. Cyril uses different language in speaking of the prayers offered at the Eucharist for the local fathers who had fallen asleep, and of the "mention" of "patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs:" of the former he says that it brings great advantage to their souls to be prayed for while the dread Sacrifice is lying there; but of the latter, the "mention" is made in order "that God by their prayers and intercessions may accept our supplication."²

¹ Brightman, p. 128: Τῶν ἐν πίστει Χριστοῦ προκεκοιμημένων πατέρων τε καὶ ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαυσον, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, μνησθεὶς τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος προπατόρων, πατέρων, πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὁμολογητῶν, ἐπισκόπων, δούλων, δικαίων, πάντες πνεύματος ἐν πίστει Χριστοῦ τετελειωμένων, καὶ ὧν ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ τὴν ὑπόμνησιν ποιούμεθα, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Μάρκου τοῦ ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ τοῦ ὑποδείξαντος ἡμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας, . . . ἐξαιρέτως τῆς παναγίας ἀχράντου εὐλογημένης δεσποίνης ἡμῶν θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας.

² *Mystag.* v. 9: Ἐἴτα μνημονεύομεν καὶ τῶν προκεκοιμημένων, πρῶτον πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὅπως ὁ θεὸς ταῖς εὐχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ πρεσβείαις προσδέξεται ἡμῶν τῇν δέησιν.

The "mention" is no longer a prayer for them. This language agrees precisely with what we find in the liturgy called the Liturgy of St. James.¹ It may be granted that, as St. Austin suggests, it seems hardly seemly for us to offer even so simple a prayer as that contained in the Liturgy of St. Mark on behalf of saints so exalted as the Blessed Virgin. Yet it is a safer thing to do than, as Epiphanius says, to put them on the same level with the Lord Jesus Christ by praying to them and not for them.

It must in justice be remembered that those Fathers who allowed the Invocation of Saints to grow up, protested strenuously that what they allowed was not really an adoration of either the saints or their relics—a notion for which they professed, and no doubt felt, a deep abhorrence. "Who ever worshipped the martyrs, O mad pate?" asks the overbearing Jerome; "who ever

εἶτα καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν προκεκοιμημένων ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ ἐπισκόπων καὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς τῶν ἐν ἡμῶν προκεκοιμημένων· μεγίστην ὕψισιν πιστεύοντες ἵσασθαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἡ δέησις ἀναφέρεται, τῆς ἁγίας καὶ φρικωδεστάτης προκειμένης θυσίας.

¹ Brightman, p. 56 foll.

took a man for God ? ”¹ “ The Christian people,” says the more reasonable Austin, “ throngs the memorials (or chapels) of the martyrs with religious solemnity, to stimulate the imitation of them, to obtain fellowship in their merits, and to be helped by their prayers ; but we erect no altars to any of the martyrs, but to the martyrs’ God, though in the martyrs’ memorials. What bishop, standing at the altar in the places where their holy bodies are buried, ever said, ‘ We offer to thee, O Peter, or O Paul, or O Cyprian ? ’ What is offered is offered to God who crowned the martyrs. . . We attend upon the martyrs with the same attentions of love and fellowship as we attend upon holy men of God in this life, whose hearts we feel to be ready to endure the same suffering for the truth of the Gospel. But the worship which implies a service proper to the divine nature, we neither pay nor teach men to pay to any save to God only.”²

¹ *Adv. Vigilant.* p. 282 (Martianay) : *Quis enim, o insanum caput, aliquando martyres adoravit ? quis hominem putavit deum ?*

² See the passage above, p. 123. It continues : *Quis enim antistitem in locis sanctorum corporum assistens altari aliquando*

The theory, even to this day, of those who uphold the Invocation of Saints, is that we only ask their intercessions, and so avoid an infringement of the prerogatives of God. Even if in form the request should appear to be a prayer to the saint, in intention it is otherwise.¹ If you ask a saint to give you release from pain, you do not ask him to do so of his own power, but to procure it by his intercession with God. And there may be good Christians who understand this theory, and bear it in mind when invoking the saints. Yet it needs but little knowledge either of history or of human nature to see that for most men such prayers become actual prayers to the saints, and the answer is regarded as coming actually from them. The passage

dixit, "Offerimus tibi, Patre, aut Paule, aut Cypriane!" sed quod offertur, offertur deo qui martyres coronauit . . . Colimus ergo martyres eo cultu dilectionis et societatis, quo et in hac uita coluntur sancti homines dei, quorum cor ad talem pro euangelica ueritate passionem paratum esse sentimus; sed illos tanto deuotius, quanto securius post certamina superata . . . at illo cultu, quae Graece λατρεία dicitur, Latine uno uerbo dici non potest, cum sit quaedam proprie diuinitati debita seruitus, nec colimus nec colendum dicimus nisi unum deum.

¹ Thom. Aq. *Summa*, II^a. sec^{ae}. q. 83, a. 4.

which I quoted from St. Basil¹ is enough to show it—the earliest recorded encouragement to the practice of invocation. St. Mamas has “brought” people “home from journeys,” “restored” them from sicknesses, “given” them back children from the dead, and “extended” for them the boundaries of life. Basil very likely meant that it was by his intercessions that Mamas had effected all this, though he does not say so. The hearers, most of whom had been brought up in heathenism, would be slow to follow the process. They would not care how the result was reached; they would only care that Mamas had done it. For all practical purposes he became to them a god—a god within reach.

It may almost be said that theologians, as time went on, made it their business to aid the process of corruption. John of Damascus² teaches that inasmuch as the saints are made true partakers of the Divine nature, they are therefore

¹ See p. 135.

² *De Imaginibus*, Or. iii. 33: “Ὡςπερ τοίνυν ἀληθῶς εἰσι θεοί, οὐ φύσει, ἀλλ’ ὡς τοῦ φύσει θεοῦ μέτοχοι, οὕτως εἰσι προσκνητοί, οὐχὶ φύσει, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὸν φύσει προσκνητὸν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἔχοντες.

Gods indeed, and, as such, are legitimate objects of worship. I know what is said in defence of his language. In part I assent to it. But the fact remains that he deliberately and in so many words justifies a Christian polytheism, not merely as a doctrine, but as a practical system. Keen and plausible as his arguments and those of his supporters are, they are the sophistical pleadings of men who find a practice in existence for which they feel bound to find a good reason. It is an attitude for which we may feel much sympathy, but nevertheless the argument is not justified.

The utility of calling upon the saints depends largely upon a great assumption. It is the assumption that they are in a position to hear our appeal, and to act upon it. If we were sure that we could make known our desires to the departed, we should undoubtedly be deprived of a great assistance if we were forbidden to do so.

But we do not know that they are near or that they can hear us. No authority which the Christian recognises as final and conclusive

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declares it to be so. Our Lord gave us no indication of the kind. Holy Scripture is silent upon the subject. The Fathers speak doubtfully about it. They contradict one another, and sometimes even themselves. Thus St. Ambrose in one place says boldly, "We should implore the aid of the martyrs, whose patronage (so to speak) appears to be ensured and pledged to us by the possession of their bodies. They can pray for our sins; . . . for they are God's martyrs, our protectors, who scrutinize our lives and conduct."¹ But in another place he says more cautiously, addressing his deceased brother, "Full of pity as was thy holy mind towards thine own, if thou knewest Italy to be now pressed by a foe so near at hand, how deeply wouldest thou groan; how wouldest thou sorrow that our sole hope of safety consisted in the barrier of the Alps!"²

"You say," cries the truculent Jerome, in one

¹ *De Viduis*, 9: *Martyres obsecrandi, quorum uidemur nobis quodam corporis pignore patrocinium vindicare. Possunt pro peccatis rogare nostris; . . . isti enim dei martyres nostri praesules, speculatores uitae actorumque nostrorum.*

² *De Excessu Fratris*, 31.

of his moods, to Vigilantius, " that the souls of the Apostles and Martyrs are settled in the bosom of Abraham, or in the place of repose, or under the altar of God, and cannot get out of their graves, or be present where they like. To be sure, they have the privilege of senators, and are not shut up in a filthy prison among murderers ; but they are confined in a free and honourable custody in the isles of the blessed and the Elysian fields. Will you lay down laws for God ? Will you put the Apostles in chains, and keep them in custody right up to the day of judgment, and not allow them to be with the Lord, although it is written, 'These follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth' ? If the Lamb is everywhere, then we must suppose that those who are with the Lamb are everywhere also. When the devil and the evil spirits roam about the whole world, and by their great swiftness are to be found everywhere, shall the martyrs, after the outpouring of their blood, be shut up and confined in an altar, and unable to get out of it ?"¹ Yet, like

¹ *Adv. Vigilant.* p. 283 : *Ais enim vel in sinu Abraham, vel*

Ambrose, after rehearsing the woes of the Empire in his panegyric upon one whom he considers to be a saint, Jerome says, "Happy is Nepotian, that he does not see these things; happy that he does not hear of them. It is we who are to be pitied;—and yet we wish to live, and think those who are away from all these things to deserve our tears rather than to be considered blessed!"¹

Austin, as is his wont, goes more thoroughly into the question. "If," he says, in a touching passage, "the souls of the dead took an active interest in the affairs of the living, and if when we see them in dreams it were they in person who addressed us, then, not to speak of others,

in loco refrigerii, uel subter aram dei, animas apostolorum et martyrum consedis, nec posse de suis tumultis et ubi uoluerint adesse praesentes. Senatoriae uidelicet dignitatis sunt, et non inter homicidas tecterrimo carcere, sed in libera honestaque custodia in fortunatorum insulis et in campis Elysiis recluduntur. Tu deo leges pones? tu apostolis uincula inicies, ut usque ad diem iudicii teneantur custodia, nec sint cum domino suo, de quibus scriptum est, "Sequuntur Agnum, quocumque uadit"? Si Agnus ubique, ergo et hi qui cum Agno sunt, ubique esse credendi sunt. Et cum diabolus et daemones toto uagentur in orbe et celeritate nimia ubique praesentes sint, martyres post effusionem sanguinis sui ara operientur inclusi, et inde exire non poterunt!

¹ *Epist.* xxxv. p. 274.

I should not be left one night without my affectionate mother, who followed me over land and sea to live with me. God forbid that her happier estate should have made her hard-hearted, so that when something wrings my heart she offers no consolation to her son in anguish, whom once she loved so singularly and could not bear even to see him in low spirits. . . . But if even our parents take no part in our affairs, what other dead are there who know what we are doing and what is happening to us? The prophet Isaiah says, 'Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.' If those great patriarchs knew not what was happening to the people descended from them, how can the dead know and help and be associated with the affairs of the living? How can we say that it was a mercy for those who died before the troubles which followed their decease, if even after death they feel all the changes and chances of the human life of woe? . . . What was the great advantage promised by God to good King Josiah that he should die without

seeing the threatened evils which were to come upon the place and people?" "The spirits of the departed," he concludes, "are where they do not see what is done and happens to men in this life."

I must carry somewhat further my quotation of this discussion of St. Austin's. He says that we must admit that although the dead do not know at the moment what is going on upon

¹ *De Cura ger. pro Mortuis*, 16 : *Si rebus uiuentium interessent animae mortuorum, et ipsae nos quando eas uidemus alloquerentur in somniis, ut de aliis taceam, me ipsum pia mater nulla nocte desereret, quae terra marique secuta est ut mecum uiueret. Absit enim ut facta sit uita feliciore crudelis, usque adeo ut quando aliquid angit cor meum, nec tristem filium consoletur, quem dilexit unice, quem numquam uoluit maestum uidere . . . Si autem parentes non intersunt, qui sunt alii mortuorum qui mouerint quid agamus quidue patiamur? Isaias propheta dicit, "Tu es enim pater noster; quia Abraham nesciuit nos, et Israel non cognouit nos." Si tanti patriarchae quid erga populum ex his procreatum ageretur ignorauerunt, quomodo mortui uiuorum rebus atque actibus cognoscendis adiuuandisque miscentur? Quomodo dicimus eis fuisse consultum, qui obierunt antequam uenirent mala, quae illorum obitum consecuta sunt, si et post mortem sentiunt quaecumque in uitae humanae calamitate contingunt? . . . Quid est ergo quod piissimo regi Iosiae pro magno beneficio promissit Deus, quod esset ante moriturus, ne uideret mala quae uentura illi loco et populo minabatur? . . . Ibi ergo sunt spiritus defunctorum, ubi non uident quaecumque aguntur aut eueniunt in ista uita hominibus.*

earth, they may get to know of it later, from those who pass to them by death ; they do not learn everything, but only what they are permitted to know, because it is good for them to know it. Angels also, who certainly are present in earthly concerns, may perhaps carry to the dead such intelligence as they may require. Again, things past, present, or future may be made known to the dead where occasion demands it, by direct revelation of the Holy Ghost, as in the case of the prophets while upon earth. It is in this way that Austin accounts for the fact—for he does not doubt that it is a fact—that the martyrs sometimes interpose when invoked in earthly affairs. They do so by an exceptional exercise of the power of God ; not because it belongs to the normal condition of the departed soul.¹

“How the martyrs aid those whom undoubtedly they help, is a question which passes my powers of understanding : whether they are personally present at the same time in different and widely distant places, either at their shrines,

¹ *Ibid.* 18, 19.

or independently of their shrines ; or whether they abide sequestered from all converse with mortals in a place agreeable to their deserts, but yet praying generally for the needs of those in supplication (even as we pray for the dead, though we are not present with them, and do not know where they are nor what they are doing), and Almighty God, who is everywhere present, . . . hearing the prayers of the martyrs, by means of the widespread ministry of the angels gives succour to the men for whom He judges it right in this poor life, and by His wonderful and unspeakable power and goodness commends the worthy deeds of His martyrs where, and when, and as He wills, but especially in connexion with their shrines, because He knows it to be expedient for us in building up the faith of Christ, for the confession of which they suffered. This is a matter too high for me to attain unto, and too abstruse for me to search out ; and therefore which of these two accounts is the true one, or perhaps whether both are true, that sometimes these things are done by the actual presence of the martyrs, and sometimes by

angels who personate the martyrs, I dare not decide, but would rather inquire of those who know." ¹

It was not likely that others would be content to remain in the modest uncertainty of Austin. Speculation on the conditions of the dead was too busy to leave such questions unanswered ; and by the time of Gregory the Great the

¹ *De Cura ger. pro Mort.* 20 : *Quamquam ista quaestio vires intelligentiae meae vincit, quemadmodum opitulentur martyres iis quos per eos certum est adiuvare ; utrum ipsi per se ipsos adsint uno tempore tam diversis locis, et tanta inter se longinquitate discretis ; siue ubi sunt eorum memoriae ; siue praeter suas memorias ubicumque adesse sentiuntur ; an ipsis in loco suis mei iis congruo ad omni mortalium conversatione remotis, et tamen generaliter orantibus pro indigentibus supplicantium (sicut nos oramus pro mortuis, quibus utique non praesentamur, nec ubi sint vel quid agant scimus), deus omnipotens, qui est ubique praesens, nec concretus nobis, nec remotus a nobis, exaudiens martyrum preces, per angelica ministeria usquequaque diffusa praebeat hominibus illis solacia, quibus in huius vitae miseria iudicat esse praebenda, et suorum merita martyrum, ubi vult, quando vult, quomodo vult, maximeque per eorum memorias, quoniam hoc novit expedire nobis ad aedificandam fidem Christi, pro cuius illi confessione sunt passi, mirabili atque ineffabili potestate ac bonitate commendat. Res haec altior est quam ut a me possit attingi et abstrusior quam ut a me valeat perscrutari : et ideo quid horum duorum sit, an vero fortassis utrumque sit, ut aliquando ista fiant per ipsam praesentiam martyrum, aliquando per angelos suscipientes personas martyrum, definire non audeo ; mallet a scientibus ista perquirere.*

answer had been found. Commenting upon the words of Job, "His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them,"¹ Gregory remarks that "as those who are yet alive know not where the souls of the dead are kept, so the dead are not aware in what manner the life of those who live after them in the flesh is disposed; because the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and as bodily and unbodily things are different in kind, they are differently apprehended. But," he adds, "this must not be supposed to be the case with the souls of the saints; they inwardly see the brightness of Almighty God, and therefore we cannot believe that they are ignorant of anything outward."² Thus a virtual omniscience is attributed to the

¹ Job xiv. 21.

² *Moral. in Iob xii. 21* : *Sicut enim hi qui adhuc uiuentes sunt, mortuorum animae quo loco habeantur, ignorant, ita mortui, uita in carne uiuentium post eos qualiter disponatur, nesciunt : quia et uita spiritus longe est a uita carnis, et sicut corporea atque incorporea diuersa sunt genere, ita etiam distincta cognitione. Quod tamen de animabus sanctis sentiendum non est, quia quae intus omnipotentis dei claritatem uident, nullo modo credendum est quia foris sit aliquid quod ignorent.*

saints. As they see everything reflected, as it were, in the mind of God, they are aware of the appeals that are made to them on earth, and exert themselves on the suppliant's behalf.¹

You will observe that Fathers like St. Austin did not base their belief that the saints can hear our prayers upon the teaching of the Bible, with regard to their actual conditions, but upon what they took to be the evidence of facts. They saw miracles taking place at the tombs of the martyrs, and in answer to the invocation of the martyrs, and they concluded that the martyrs heard them. I do not care to dispute the reality of miracles attested by the great fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries—sometimes from personal observation. Examination tends to confirm the reality even of a

¹ It must in justice be said that the practice of invoking the saints does not necessarily depend on the belief that the saints are already in heaven, or have attained their consummation, however it may be expressed. The Roman divines do not forbid, though they do not much encourage, the invocation of souls who are supposed to be in purgatory (Hurter, *Compendium*, iii. p. 618). In the Eastern Church, it is the common practice for people to commend themselves to the prayers of their deceased parents and friends, even where there was no mark of special sanctity.

large percentage of those which are said to take place nowadays at Lourdes and La Salette, as well as in lowlier faith-healing circles. The inferences to be derived, however, from their occurrence are precarious. St. Austin himself was quite sceptical, if I may use the word without offence, as to whether the saint's part in a miracle wrought at his tomb was a conscious part or not. Ananias, he said, had appeared in a vision to Saul of Tarsus without being aware of it himself. He thought it might be so with some of the miracles connected with the martyrs, that God accomplished them by angelic agency, "while the martyrs themselves were in profound repose, absorbed in other far better objects of contemplation, separated from us, and engaged in prayer on our behalf."¹

Perhaps it may be urged that so long as the desired answer is obtained, it makes no difference whether the saint who is invoked takes an

¹ *De Cura ger. pro Mort. 21 : Illis in summa quide positis, et ad alia longe meliora visa uacantibus seorsum a nobis, orantibusque pro nobis.*

active interest in the granting of it or not. Suppose that you find it easier, and more comforting, to invoke the aid of some saint than to call upon God for yourself, why should you not do so, and take the beneficial result without questioning how it comes? The answer is obvious. The principle thus employed would in like manner justify any other form of false worship. The great bounty of the one and only God often grants petitions that are offered to other names than His own. He hears the prayers which are offered by the heathen to their idols. But no one would argue this as a reason for allowing the convert from heathenism to continue praying to his idols, in the hope that the prayer might find its way onwards to the one true Object. If God vouchsafes to answer petitions addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that is no reason why people should be encouraged to go on addressing the Blessed Virgin. The worship of idols is always easier, and may to many minds be more comforting, than the resolute effort to reach and worship God in spirit and in truth. God does not

promise that His service shall always be marked by ease and comfort. Truth is a severe thing. If the saints at rest, as St. Gregory teaches and Dante after him, know all that happens upon earth, but know it only by gazing upon God as upon a living mirror, it is not reverent towards God to address ourselves directly to them without addressing Him, and to treat Him as if He were some inanimate medium of communication; and if St. Austin's theory is true, and the saints invoked are unconscious of the benefits which God confers in answer to the invocation, then it is robbing God to divert to them any portion of our thankfulness for the benefit.

I do not wish for an instant to suggest that the saints, whether of ancient times or of modern, are doing nothing for the Church militant upon earth, or for individual members of it. That they are in a state of active consciousness, and not sunk in the sleep of forgetfulness, is clear in Holy Scripture. Such being the case, they cannot have lost their interest in the persons and causes with which they were so intimately

concerned in this life. The range and extent of their knowledge of things earthly we have no means of ascertaining. They may or may not be able to follow intelligently our changing fortunes. It is conceivable, on the one hand, that they may be aware even of the afflictions and of the sins of the living, and that the grief which the knowledge causes may be part of a discipline which they are undergoing. It is possible, on the other, as Austin said, that our life is as much concealed from them as theirs from ours. But however complete may be their ignorance of what is befalling us, they cannot have ceased to think of us or to care for us. Such a change in them would mean the total destruction of their personal identity. They could not be the same persons that they were. Abraham would not be Abraham if he no longer cared what became of his descendants. St. Peter and St. Paul would not be the Apostles whose lives and writings we know if they did not pray for the Church which was founded upon them. We cannot conceive of great intercessors like Lancelot Andrewes discontinuing to plead for

the places for which once they prayed so often and so earnestly. Almost anything would be more tolerable than to suppose that we have no place in the loving intercessions of our fathers and brethren and friends who have passed before us to be with Christ.

Of the great increase in the potency of their prayers in the place of rest, Christian sentiment has had no doubt.¹ We may well believe that the intercessions of the saints were never so powerful as since their death. This belief does not rest only upon the consideration of the superiority of their state in itself, but rather upon their more complete sanctification and their more unhindered access to God. "I am sure," says Gregory of Nazianzus, after his father's death, "that he [protects his flock] more effectually now by his

¹ Dr. Swete calls my attention to the curious passage in the *Secrets of Enoch*, p. 70 (Charles's ed.), where the writer protests against the belief that departed saints intercede for the living. "And now, my children, do not say, Our father stands before God, and prays for us to be released from sin; for there is no person there to help any man who has sinned." Vigilantius, as we have seen, made a similar objection.

intercession than he did formerly by his teaching, in proportion as he now is nearer to God, having shaken off the fetters of the body, and being rid of those impurities which obscure the understanding, and converses with the First and Purest of intelligences with no intervening veil, being admitted to the rank and liberties of the angels.”¹ In this point the polemic of Jerome against Vigilantius may deserve our sympathy. “You say in your book,” he writes, “that while we live, we can pray for one another, but that when we are dead, the prayer of none will be heard on another’s behalf. If apostles and martyrs still in the flesh can pray for others, when they still have reason to be anxious on their own account, how much more after their crowns and victories and triumphs !”²

¹ *Or. xviii.*: Πείθομαι δ’ ὅτι καὶ τῇ πρεσβείᾳ νῦν μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, ὅσῃ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐγγίξει θεῷ, τὰς σωματικὰς πέδας ἀποσεισάμενος, καὶ τῆς ἐπιβολῆς τῶν νοῦν ἱλῶος ἀπηλλαγμένος, καὶ γυμνῷ γυμνὸς ἐντυγχάνων τῷ πρῶτῳ καὶ καθαρῶτάτῃ νοί, τέλει καὶ παρησίᾳ ἀγγελικῇ, εἰ μὴ τολμηρὸν τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, ἀξιόμενος.

² *Adv. Vigilant.* p. 283: *Dicis in libello tuo, quod dum vivimus mutuo pro nobis orare possumus, postquam autem mortui fuerimus nullius sit pro alio exaudienda oratio; praesertim cum martyres ultionem sui sanguinis impetrare non quiverint.* Si

Is there, then, any way in which we may attach ourselves, as it were, to the intercessions which we are sure must be continually ascending from the saints to God? If we may not actually invoke their powerful advocacy, must we forego the hope of its advantages? The ancient devotions of Christendom provide us with a reply. There can be nothing wrong or dubious in asking Almighty God Himself that we may profit by the prayers which are offered by the departed. What is known by students under the name of "comprecation," or joining with the saints in their prayers, is both innocent and sanctioned by antiquity.

apostoli et martyres adhuc in corpore constituti possunt orare pro ceteris, quando pro se adhuc debent esse solliciti, quanto magis post coronas, uictorias, et triumphos. There is one curious exception to be made, according to Roman theologians, to the efficacy of the intercessions of the saints. They are not in a position to help the souls in purgatory. Souls in purgatory probably invoke their aid; but the saints are no longer in a position to offer satisfaction, and therefore their intercessions are less efficacious than those which living men can make (Hurter, *Compendium*, iii. p. 618). The Church therefore, in praying for the repose of the departed, barely pays a compliment to the saints, when it prays *intercedentibus omnibus sanctis*. It is difficult to see how this theory fits in with the belief that the Blessed Virgin, St. Francis, and other saints, periodically deliver souls out of purgatory.

I take, somewhat at random, examples from the two chief liturgies of East and West—

“Making mention of our all-holy, spotless, blessed and glorious Lady, Mary, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God.” The words come in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.¹ “Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come”—so runs a prayer in the Roman Mass—“and graciously grant, at the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever-virgin Mother of God, together with Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and Andrew, and all the saints, peace in our time, that assisted by Thy merciful aid we may be always free from sin and safe from all anxiety.”² The actual wording of these prayers does not quite commend itself to my judgment. Besides that the description of the Blessed Virgin appears a little fulsome and overloaded,

¹ Brightman, p. 363 : Τῆς παναγίας . . . Μαρίας μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων νημονεύσαντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀλλήλους καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν χριστῷ τῷ θεῷ παραθέμεθα.

² Prayer after the Lord's Prayer.

there is a danger, even in these prayers, lest too much should be made of the intercessions—lest we should seem to plead their merits before God, as we plead the merits of our only Saviour and Mediator. But the principle involved in them is sound enough. A soldier under the stress of the war may with good reason in his brief moments of devotion cast himself upon the intercessions of the Church at home, and beg God to hear on his behalf the prayers of his mother and his friends. In the same manner there is nothing superstitious or in any other way wrong if we, the Church militant here on earth, implore Almighty God to receive our petitions in union with those of all who have pleased Him from the beginning of the world, who in their place of quiet and unharassed repose cry to Him to hasten the coming of His kingdom, and that His will may be done upon earth both in great things and in small.

The practice of the Invocation of Saints has probably as much to be said for it as any other corruption which has invaded Christianity. In

view of its antiquity and of its wide diffusion, it cannot be summarily and impatiently dealt with by a Church which appeals to Catholic tradition. If other Churches with which we come in contact make use of it, perhaps we should not be justified in making its rejection a condition of communion with them, so long as in other respects they hold the true faith of Christ. But none the less the practice ought to be firmly and temperately discouraged. It ought not to be allowed to regain any footing among ourselves. What others may do is no law for us. Our religion is not based upon the teaching of St. Basil or St. Austin, however great the deference with which we study their writings. We have seen, as St. Basil and St. Austin could not have been expected to foresee, the actual harm that has come of what they permitted. Our Lord and His Apostles are, after all, our only authoritative masters, and whatever cannot be proved to have been taught by them, or to be a natural application of what they taught, we must jealously refuse to reckon among the institutions of the Christian religion.

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